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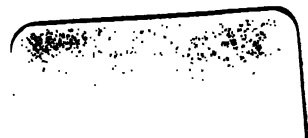
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46.

490.



THE
HULSEAN LECTURES
FOR M.DCCC.XLVI.



Cambridge:

Printed at the University Press.

CHRIST THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS,
OR THE UNCONSCIOUS PROPHECIES
OF HEATHENDOM:

BEING

THE HULSEAN LECTURES

FOR THE YEAR M.DCCC.XLVI.

BY RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH, M.A.,

VICAR OF ITCHEN STOKE, HANTS, PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY,
KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON, AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN
TO THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.



CAMBRIDGE:
MACMILLAN, BARCLAY, AND MACMILLAN.
LONDON: JOHN W. PARKER.

1846.

TO

RALPH TATHAM, D.D.,

MASTER OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE,

AND LATE VICE-CHANCELLOR.

WILLIAM WHEWELL, D.D.,

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE,

AND THE

REV. JAMES SCHOLEFIELD, M.A.,

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF GREEK,

THESE LECTURES

DELIVERED BY THEIR APPOINTMENT,

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

SUBSTANCE OF CERTAIN CLAUSES IN THE WILL
OF THE REV. J. HULSE, M.A.

(Dated July 21, 1777.)

HE founds a Lectureship in the University of Cambridge.

The Lecturer to be a "Clergyman in the University of Cambridge, of the degree of Master of Arts, and under the age of forty years." He is to be *elected annually*, "on Christmas-Day, or within seven days after, by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, and by the Master of Trinity College, and the Master of St John's College, or any two of them." In case the Master of Trinity or the Master of St. John's be the Vice-Chancellor, the Greek Professor is to be the third Trustee.

The duty of the said Lecturer is, by the Will, "to preach *twenty* Sermons in the whole year," at "St Mary Great Church in Cambridge;" but the number having been found inconvenient, application was made to the Court of Chancery for leave to reduce it, and *eight* Sermons only are now required. These are to be printed at the Preacher's expense, within twelve months after the delivery of the last Sermon.

The subject of the Lectures is to be “the Evidence for Revealed Religion; the Truth and Excellence of Christianity; Prophecies and Miracles; direct or collateral proofs of the Christian Religion, especially the collateral arguments; the more difficult texts, or obscure parts of the Holy Scriptures;” or any one or more of these topics, at the discretion of the Preacher.

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LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

HAGGAI II. 7.

The Desire of all nations shall come.

ALTHOUGH the Founder of these lectures, which it is permitted me a second time to deliver in this place, did by no means offer a narrow range of subjects, from which the preacher appointed to deliver them should make his choice, but, on the contrary, so expressed himself, that it would be quite possible to adhere to the letter of his injunctions, and still, at the same time, altogether to quit the region of Christian apology ; yet I cannot but believe that in so doing I should be forsaking the spirit of those injunctions, and hardly fulfilling the intentions with which these lectures were founded by him. Those who have gone before me in this honourable office, arguing, probably, from the subjects which he has placed in the foremost rank*, from the purpose

* See the extract from his Will at the beginning of this Volume.

which kindred foundations, by him established among us, were evidently meant to serve; from the especial importance attached by good men in the age wherein he lived, to such defences of our holy faith, have generally concluded that they should best be fulfilling his intention, to which they felt a pious reverence was due, if they undertook the maintenance of some portion of the truth, which had been especially assailed or gainsayed. Nor do I purpose, on the present occasion, to depart from the practice, which the example of my predecessors has sanctioned; having rather chosen for my argument a subject which has recommended itself to me, first, by a certain suitability, as I trust will appear, to our present needs, and to controversies of our day, such as are approaching, if we are not actually in the midst of them as yet; and secondly, by an evident bearing which it has upon one of the two great branches of study cultivated among us in this University. *Christ, the Desire of all Nations, or, The Unconscious Prophecies of Heathendom*—such appears to me the title, which will best gather up and present at a single glance to you the subject, which it will be my aim in the following discourses, if God will, under successive aspects to unfold.

Leaving aside, as not belonging to my argument, what there was of positive divinely

constituted preparation for the coming of Christ in the Jewish economy, I shall make it my task to trace what in my narrow limits I may, of the implicit expectations which there were in the heathen world—to contemplate, at least under a few leading aspects, the yearnings of the nations for a redeemer, and for all which the true Redeemer only could give,—for the great facts of his life, for the great truths of his teaching. Nor may this be all: for this, however interesting in itself, would yet scarcely come under the title of Christian ~~apology~~ ; of which the idea is, that it is not merely the truth, but the truth asserting itself in the face of error. It will therefore be my endeavour further to rescue these dim prophetic anticipations of the heathen world from the use which has sometimes been made of them, to shew that these dreams of the world, so far from helping to persuade us that all which we hold is a dream likewise, are rather exactly that which ought to have preceded the world's awaking: that these parhelions do not proclaim everything else to be an optical illusion, but announce, and witness for, a sun that is travelling into sight; that these false *ancilia* of man's forging, tell of a true which has indeed come down from heaven; that there needs ought to have been these; the transcending worth and dignity of the Christian revelation not

being diminished by their existence, but rather enhanced ; for its glory lies, not in its having relation to nothing which went before itself, but rather in its having relation to every thing, in its being the middle point to which all lines, some consciously, more unconsciously, were tending, and in which all centered at the last.

And this it is worth our while to shew : for we do not here, as the charge has sometimes been made against us, first set up the opponent,—whom we afterwards easily overthrow, for he was but the phantom of our own brain. On the contrary, it has been at divers times from the very first, and is in our own day, a part, and a favourite part, of their tactics who would resist the Faith, to endeavour to rob it of its significance as the great epoch in the world's history, by the production of anterior parallels to it. These may be parallels to its doctrines and ethical precepts ; and *they* are brought forward with the purpose of shewing that it is therefore no such wisdom of God, no such mystery that had been kept secret from the beginning of the world ; that what it professed to give as a revelation from heaven, men had attained before by the light of reason, the unassisted efforts of their own minds. The attempts to rob Christianity in this way of its significance are, as I observed, not new. If such objections have been zeal-

ously urged in modern times, they belong also to the very earliest. To take two examples, one old, one new. Celsus*, in the second century, quoting words of our blessed Lord's in which he exhorts to the forgiveness of enemies, remarks that he has found the identical precept in Plato, with only the difference, as he dares to add, that it is by the Grecian sage better and more elegantly spoken. And Gibbon, having occasion to speak of one of Christ's most memorable moral precepts, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," cannot resist the temptation of adding—"a rule which I read in a moral treatise of Isocrates four hundred years before the publication of the Gospel." And in like manner we all probably remember, if not the contents, yet the title which the book of an English deist bore, one of the ablest of that unhappy band, "*Christianity as old as the Creation*;" a book which by that

* Origen, *Con. Cels.*, l. 7, c. 58. It is worth while to see Origen's admirable answer on the difference between the *ιατρὸν ὀλίγων*, and the *ιατρὸν πολλῶν*. Augustine too (*De Doctr. Christ.* l. 2, c. 28) make mention of some in his own time, readers and lovers of Plato, qui dicere ausi sunt omnes Domini nostri Jesu Christi sententias, quas mirari et prædicare coguntur, de Platonis libris eum didicisse. St. Ambrose also, as we learn from Augustine, (*Ep.* 31,) had found it necessary to write against such; which he did in a work that now has perished.

title at once indicated the quarter from which its author advanced to the assault of revelation.

And not seldom this charge appears in an aggravated form; and it has been sought to be proved, not merely that others had said the same before the Gospel, but that it had covertly borrowed from them—that so far from being more and higher than another birth of the human mind, it possessed so little vital and independent energy, as to have been compelled to go back to prior sources, and to build with the materials of others, and adorn itself with their spoils. Urged by their desire to prove this, hoping to convict it thus of being in possession of things not its own, the adversaries of the Christian faith have gone far to seek for the anticipations and sources of its doctrine. Thus, with Voltaire, India, and still more, China, were the favourite quarters from which he laboured to shew that its wisdom had been drawn; although his almost incredible ignorance exposed him to the most ridiculous errors, and made him the dupe of poorest forgeries, palmed on him as works of the ancient wisdom of the East, and which by him were again confidently produced as such*. Somewhat later

* There is a curious account of a fraud which was played off on him, in Von Bohlen's *Das Alle Indien*, v. 1, p. 136, connecting itself with a singular piece of literary forgery. A

the Zend-Avesta and the religion of Zoroaster were triumphantly appealed to, as having been the true sun from which the borrowed light of Judaism and Christianity had proceeded. Then again, men said that our blessed Lord had been educated and initiated in the secret lore of the Essenes. Or by others, Rabbinical parallels to various sayings in the New Testament, to evangelical parables and doctrines, have been solemnly adduced, as solving the riddle of Christianity, as enough to dissipate that nimbus of glory with which it had been hitherto surrounded, to refute its loftier claims, and to prove its origin of earth, and not of heaven. So has falsehood gone round the world, as inconsistent with itself as it is remote from the truth, each later birth of it devouring the preceding.

Jesuit missionary, whose zeal led him to assume the appearance of an Indian Fakir, in the beginning of last century forged a Veda, of which the purpose was, secretly to undermine the religion which it professed to support, and so to facilitate the introduction of Christianity—to advance, that is, the kingdom of truth with a lie. This forged Veda is full of every kind of error or ignorance in regard of the Indian religions. After lying, however, long in a Romanist missionary college at Pondicherry, it found its way to Europe, and a transcript of it came into the hands of Voltaire, who eagerly used it for the purpose of depreciating the Christian books, and shewing how many of their doctrines had been anticipated by the wisdom of the East. The book had thus an end worthy of its beginning.

And they have wrought in the same spirit, and in reality with the same weapons to the same ends, who yet, somewhat shifting their ground, have not so much sought to turn our Christian faith into a doctrine which had been often taught before, as into a dream which has been often dreamed before—who have not therefore laboured to produce parallels to its isolated sayings or doctrines—to rob it here and there of a jewel in its crown; but have aspired to a completer victory, striking at the very person and acts of Him on whom it rests, and out of whom it has unfolded itself. And in this way;—they have ransacked all records of ancient religions for such parallels, nearer or more remote, as they could in them find, not now to the sayings, but to the doings, of his life; and having mustered and marshalled in a threatening order as many of these as they could draw together, they have turned round and said to us—“All the world through, men have been imagining for themselves, as you see, sons of God, expiations by sacrifice, direct communications with an higher world, oracles and prophecies, wielders of a power mightier than nature’s, restorers of a lost Paradise, conquerors of Hades, ascensions into heaven. They have *imagined* them, and nothing more; for the things which they thus in spirit grasped at, never found an historic realiza-

tion ; however they may have enriched themselves, and we do not deny that they did so, with the thought that such things had been, or one day should be." And then they have gone on to ask us, what right had we to difference our hope from the hope of all others? They longed so earnestly, that at last their longing wove a garment, made even a body, for itself; what right have any to affirm that it is otherwise with the things which they believe?

And thus, because men have hoped for, and reached after, that which in Christ is given, and hoped so intensely, that they have sometimes imagined it to be actually theirs, have so projected their hope, as to give it at last an objective reality, we are bidden to believe that ours is but such an ardent desire, fashioning at length a body for itself. Parading a long line of shadows, these adversaries require us to acknowledge the substance we have embraced to be a shadow also; shewing how much false money is in the world, and has at different times passed current, they demand of us, how we dare to assume that which we have accepted to be true;—when they should see that the shadows imply a substance somewhere, that the false money passes only under shelter of a true. Proving, as it is not hard to prove, those parallels to be groundless and mythical, to rest on no true

historic basis, they hope that the great facts of the Christian's belief will be concluded to be as weak—that they will be involved in a common discredit*—and the faiths of which those other formed a part having come to nothing, or evidently hastening to decay, that this may be assumed to underlie the same judgment, and to be hastening to the same inevitable dissolution, however the signs of it as yet may not appear.

This scheme of attack has been so long and so vigorously plied, so much success has been expected from it, that in the works of the later assailants of revelation from this quarter, there speaks out a certain indignation, mingled with astonishment, at the resistance which it is still presuming to offer; as though it were not to be endured, that every other religion should have confessed itself a mythology, and that this should deny it still—that each other, like a startled ghost, should

* Tertullian (*Apol.* 47) speaks of the way in which these parallels were played off against the Christian verities—Elysium not only having forfeited belief in itself, but having helped to destroy a belief in heaven—Minos and Rhadamanthus having made the judgment-seat of Christ a mockery;—though according to his narrow fashion he sees in them nothing but the adulteria veritatis—the work of the jealous envy of evil spirits, quæ de similitudine fidem infirmarent veritatis. But if the truth was hard to receive with these, might it not have been impossible to receive without them?

have vanished at the first cockcrow of an intellectual morn, but that this should continue to affront, as boldly and as confidently as ever, even the light of the world's middle day—that each other should have crumbled into nothing at the first touch of the wand of a critical philosophy, but that this should entirely refuse to obey its dissolving spell.

Now all charges against the truth, however destitute of any solid foundation, out of whatever perversity of heart or mind they may have sprung, yet, when continually re-appearing, when repeating themselves in different ages, and by the mouths of different objectors, and those independent of one another, have yet, we may be sure, something which has rendered them not merely possible, but plausible; which suggested them first, and with the frivolous and thoughtless, with those that have been eager to believe them, and to be quit of the restraints of a positive faith, has given them currency and favour. Let me seek, then, as an important element of my subject, to consider what that something is, which has served to suggest, and afterwards to give a point to these charges; and, not pausing here, to shew that the truth, which, however distorted, is at the bottom of these charges, is one which we may cheerfully and without any misgiving recognize. And this is not all: for I would fain also shew that


it would be a grievous deficiency, if that were absent from our Christian faith which has been the motive and hint to these accusations—if that faith, as far as regards the whole anterior world except the Jewish, stood in relation to nothing which men had thought, or felt, or hoped, or believed; with no other coefficient but the Jewish, and resting on no broader historic basis than that would supply. It will be my purpose to enquire whether we may not contemplate the relations of the absolute Truth to the anterior religions of the world, in an aspect in which we shall cease altogether from regarding with suspicion these apparent anticipations of good things given us in Christ; in which instead of being secretly embarrassed by them, and hardly knowing exactly how to deal with, or where to range them, we shall joyfully accept these presentiments of the truth, so far as they are satisfactorily made out, as enhancing the greatness and glory of the truth itself; and as being, so far as they are allowed to have any weight, confirmations of it.

Nor will it be a small satisfaction,—if this be possible, as I believe it easy,—to make our adversaries do drudging work for us; to plough with their oxen; to enter, as we shall do then, upon their labours; and all that they have painfully gathered up with purposes hostile to the faith—to appropriate, and make defensive of

it; not so much anxiously defending our own position, as confidently turning theirs; wrestling from them their own weapons, and then wielding them against themselves.

And first, in regard of the ethical anticipations of what is given to us in the Gospel,—the goodly maxims, the striking precepts, the memorable sayings, which are gathered from the fields of heathen philosophy, and then sometimes used to depress the original worth of the teaching of Christ and his Apostles,—I will not urge here, and I have no object in urging, though I may, in passing, remark, how many that are sometimes adduced of these are wholly deceptive as parallels to Christian truths. How often in their organic connexion they would be very far from containing that echo or presentiment of truth which we deem we catch in them—how often they have in deed a very different significance from that which *we* first *put* in them; and only afterwards educe from them. Nor yet will I press how the goodliest maxim is indeed nothing, save in its coherence to a body of truth; how a world of such maxims, were they gotten together, would be only as ten thousand artificial lamps, failing altogether to constitute a day, and not in the remotest degree doing the work, or supplying to the world the place, of a single sun.

Not to press this, and accepting fully and freely what has been said wisely and well before the Gospel and apart from the Gospel, and allowing to the full that it has many times touched the heart of the matter, yet still is there nothing here which we need wish we could deny, which we should not rather desire to find. Indeed, so far from there having been in time past a shunning or ignoring of these heathen parallels, the early apologists perhaps only admitted them too freely: yet thus at any rate testified that to acknowledge them they felt to be no confession of a weakness in their position. Thus more than one has likened the faithful delivered from an evil world to the children of Israel brought out of Egypt, who borrowed and carried forth from thence vessels of gold and vessels of silver, the same which probably afterwards furnished the precious metals which they dedicated to the holier uses of the sanctuary. In like manner, they said, there was much which the faithful, delivered out of the spiritual Egypt, would leave behind him, as all its abominable idolatries, but something also which he would carry forth, and which he had a right to carry forth, for it was not truly the riches of that land. This silver and this gold had been originally dug from mines of divine truth, and bearing it with him, he only re-



claimed to its noblest purposes that which had been more or less alienated and perverted from them*.

Nor need *we* deal more timidly with these parallels than they did. So long, indeed, as we regard God's revelation of Himself in Christ, as a revelation merely of certain moral truths, it may be startling to find ought that is therein, anticipated in any other quarter. But when we more rightly contemplate it as the manifesting of life, that the Life was manifested, and

* Thus Augustine (*De Doctr. Christ.* l. 2. c. 40): Philosophi autem qui vocantur, si qua forte vera et fidei nostræ accommodata dixerunt, maximè Platonici, non solum formidanda non sunt, sed ab eis etiam tanquam injustis possessoribus in usum nostrum vindicanda. Sicut enim Ægyptii non solum idola habebant et onera gravia, quæ populus Israël detestaretur et fugeret, sed etiam vasa atque ornamenta de auro et argento, et vestem, quæ ille populus exiens de Ægypto sibi potius tanquam ad usum meliorem clanculo vindicavit, non auctoritate propriâ, sed præcepto Dei, ipsis Ægyptiis nescienter commodantibus ea, quibus non bene utebantur, sic doctrinæ omnes Gentilium non solum simulata et superstitiosa figmenta gravesque sarcinas supervacui laboris habent,.....sed etiam liberales disciplinas usui veritatis aptiores,.....quod eorum tanquam aurum et argentum, quod non ipsi instituerunt, sed de quibusdam quasi metallis divinæ providentiæ, quæ ubique infusa sunt, eruerunt,.....debet ab eis auferre Christianus ad usum justum prædicandi Evangelii. Origen (*Ep. ad Gregor.* tom. i. p. 30) uses the same illustration, observing, however, that, according to his experience, the gold which is brought out of Egypt is oftener used for the fashioning of an idol, a golden calf, the work of men's own hands which they worship, than for the adorning of the tabernacle of God.

dwelt among us, then we feel that they who gave, and could give, precepts and maxims only, however precious these were, whatever witness they bore to a light shining in the darkness, to a divine spark not trodden out in man, to a God nurturing the heathen, with all this yet gave not that which for man is the gift of gifts and blessing of blessings. And this is the true way in which to contemplate it. That which differences Christianity from all other religions is not its theory of morals; this is a most real, yet at the same time only a relative difference, for there were ethics before there were Christian ethics*. But its difference is, that it is life and power, that it transforms, that it transfigures, that it makes new creatures, that it does for all what others only promised to do for a few. Herein the essential difference

* Grotius indeed says (*De Verit. Rel. Christ.* 4. 12), Ejus [scil. religionis Christianæ] partes singulæ tantæ sunt honestatis, ut suapte luce animos quasi convincant, ita ut inter paganos non defuerint qui dixerint singula, quæ nostra religio habet universa. Lactantius expresses himself more cautiously, and is careful to add how none but a teacher sent from God could have knit these scattered limbs into a body. He says, *Instit.* 7. 7, Nullam sectam fuisse tam deviam, nec philosophorum quendam tam inanem, qui non viderit aliquid e vero. Quodsi extitisset aliquis, qui veritatem, sparsam per singulos, per sectasque diffusam, colligeret in unum, et redigeret in corpus, is profectò non dissentiret à nobis. Sed hoc nemo facere, nisi veri peritus ac sciens, potest: verum autem non nisi ejus scire est, qui sit doctus à Deo.

resides. Men, for instance, before it came, could speak worthy things, and could really feel them, about the beauty of overcoming their desires, of forgiving their enemies, of repaying injuries with kindness, of coming to God with clean hands and a clean heart. Such sayings abound in every code of morals: but the unhappiness was, that they who said them and they who admired them, did little more than this. It was not that there was any falseness in their admiration: they delighted in them after the inner man, but in the actual struggle with evil, they were ever weak to bring them to effect. There was a great gulf between the saying and the doing, which never till in Christ was effectually bridged over; so that the Christian speaker in that beautiful dialogue, the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, exactly hit the mark, when, to characterize the practical of Christian life as distinguished from the speculative of heathen philosophy, he exclaimed of that sect every where spoken against, to which he belonged, *Non eloquimur magna, sed vivimus.*

And yet, brethren, when we thus trace the miserable contradiction that ever existed in the world out of Christ, between the good seen and the evil done, the vast chasm between the two, let this be with no purpose of laying bare their sores, with no thought of glorying

in their infirmities, to whom in a less favoured time the only fountain of effectual strength and healing had not yet been opened. For indeed, brethren, may there not be many a one among ourselves to whom, with far less excuse, all this explains itself, alas! only too easily? many a one, it may be, who remembers times of his own life, before his moral convictions had been gathered up and found their middle point in Christ—and in those times repeated falls under temptation, which explain to him only too vividly the condition, in which this ever-recurring infidelity of men to their moral convictions found place—in which they were thus able to trace the outlines of a righteousness, but impotent to fill them up, and so ever leaving it in outline still—well skilled to draw a ground-plan, but weak to build any superstructure thereon—the virtue loved, till the opportunity came for practising it; the sin hated, till the moment for testifying that hatred had arrived.

But to pass on to the other charge, to the resemblances to the great facts on which our faith reposes, to the great events of our Lord's life which are brought from other quarters with the requirement, because those have proved weak to stand, that we should acknowledge these to be weak also;—they only will consent to such a conclusion, who have failed to per-

ceive that according to the very highest idea of Christianity, there must needs have been such. For what do we affirm of Christ? when do we conceive worthily of Him? When we conceive of Him, in the prophet's words, as "the Desire of all nations"—the fulfiller of the world's hopes—the stiller of creation's groans—the great birth of time, unto which all the unspeakable throes of a suffering humanity had been tending from the first. These resemblances disturb us not at all,—are rather most welcome; for we do not believe the peculiar glory of what in Christ we possess to consist in this, that it is unlike every thing else, "the cold denial and contradiction of all that men have been dreaming of through the different ages of the world, but rather the sweet reconciliation and exquisite harmony of all past thoughts, anticipations, revelations;" that all whereof men had a troubled dream before, did in Him become a waking reality; that what men were devising, and most inadequately, for themselves, God has perfectly given us in his Son—that in the room of shifting cloud-palaces, with their mockery of temple and tower, stands for us a city which hath come down from heaven, but whose foundations rest upon earth—that we have divine *facts*—facts no doubt which are ideal, in that they are the vehicle of

everlasting truths; history indeed which is far more than history, for it embodies the largest and most continually recurring thoughts which have stirred the bosom of humanity from the beginning. We say that the divine ideas which had wandered up and down the world, till oftentimes they had well nigh forgotten themselves and their own origin, did at length clothe themselves in flesh and blood; they became incarnate with the Incarnation of the Son of God. In his life and person the idea and the fact at length kissed each other, and were henceforward wedded for evermore.

If these things be so, and it will be my desire in this place, and in these lectures, to trace how they are, one or two considerations will lie very near to us; and with the pressing of these on your thoughts and hearts I will this day conclude. And first, the general consideration, that what there may have been in the world obscurely struggling to be Christian before Christ and his Church, so far from suggesting to us poorer thoughts of what in Him we possess, under how far more glorious aspect does it present that to us! All which men before could conceive, but could not realize, could feel after, but could not grasp, could dream of, but ever when they awoke found nothing in their hands,—it is here; “the

body is of Christ." And the Church which he has founded, we may from this point of view contemplate it as sitting upon many waters, upon the great ocean of truth, from which every stream which has at all or at any time refreshed the earth was originally drawn, and to which it duteously brings its waters again*. We may contemplate that Church as having, in that it has the Word and Spirit of its Lord, the measure of all partial truth in itself, receiving the homage of all human systems, meekly, and yet, like a queen, as her right; understanding them far better than they ever understood themselves; disallowing their false, and what true they have, setting her seal to that true, and issuing it with a brighter image, and a sharper outline, and a more paramount authority, from her own mint.

Again, if "the glory which excelleth" of that which we have in Christ is, that it is not shadow but substance, not anticipation but possession—not the idea, but the fact, or rather the fact and the idea in one, how are we letting go our most precious gains, when we at all let go, or when we even slight our historic faith, resting on and finding its object in the

* Clement of Alexandria on this very matter (*Strom.* l. 1. c. 5): *Μία μὲν οὖν τῆς ἀληθείας ὁδός· ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὴν καθάπερ εἰς ἀένναον ποταμὸν, ἐκρέουσι τὰ ρεῖθρα ἄλλα ἄλλοθεν.*

person of the Saviour! What a miserable exchange, to give up this, and to accept the largest, the most vaunted theories concerning the godlike and the true in its room and as its adequate substitute, the most magnificent ideas in the place of the humblest affiance on the Son of God—soon to find that we have gotten pebbles for jewels, words for things—that we are in a world peopled only with ghosts and phantoms! Oh loss unutterable, if we allow any to strip off for us the historic realization of the truth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, as though it were not of the essence of the matter, as though it were a thing indifferent, useful perhaps for the simpler members of the Church, but for others hindering rather than helping the contemplation of the pure idea, which they would persuade us is all that we need to retain. They promise, it is true, who invite to this sacrifice, that if we will destroy this temple of our historic faith, in three days, yea, in an instant as by a magic wand, they will raise us up a goodlier and more gorgeous fabric in its room. Let it be our wisdom to give no credence to their words; knowing this, that it was the very blessedness which the coming of the Son of God in the flesh brought us, that it brought us that which these would fain persuade us to relinquish and

renounce, that it lifted men out of and above that condition into which these deceivers would willingly have them to return.

No doubt there is a temptation to give in to this, a temptation working in each one of us—to take up, that is, with a religion which shall consist in the contemplating of great and ennobling ideas, instead of in the serving with a straightforward and downright obedience a personal God. Those ideas, we feel that we can deal with them as we like; they exert no constraining power upon us; we are their masters, and not they ours: or if we have given them any rule over us, when the stress comes, we can withdraw it again—allowing them just as much authority as is convenient to us. There is no “Be thou holy, for I am holy” in them—no pointing to the rugged way of the cross, with a forerunner walking there, and a command that we also walk in it. Let us beware earnestly of so subtle a temptation, looking as it does so fair, and finding so much in our slothful and sinful hearts that makes them only too ready to embrace it.

And surely, brethren, at this season the Church suggests and presents to us mighty helps against all this. What help so effectual as to enter truly and deeply into the passion of our Lord—to tarry at no cold and careless distance from that cross to which each day of

this lenten season is now bringing us nigher? but to seek to draw forth the riches of grace which are laid up for us in it, and in the considering of Him that hanged thereon. Let us determine, brethren, that in this coming week, the beginning it may be of a more holy life, we will bring ourselves continually within the sphere of those mighty, those transforming influences, which are ever going forth from thence. Let us make proof how it can open for us the fountain of purifying tears, sealed it may be for long—how a burden can be laid down at its foot which is crushing us to the earth, and from which nowhere else is deliverance. Let us seek to enter into nearer fellowship with the Man of sorrows, with our crucified God. And then, when we have proved how this fellowship can bless us, how it can cleanse us from our impurities, how it can strengthen us for our tasks, how it can enable us to tread underfoot our enemies, we shall not readily exchange such a fellowship as this with a living lord, so full fraught with blessings, for that of mere notions and phantoms, which however much they may promise, will desert us in the hour of need, and prove utterly helpless, whensoever the real stress of life's trial comes.

LECTURE II.

THE VANQUISHER OF HADES.

(Preached on Easter Sunday.)

MARK XVI. 3.

*Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of
the sepulchre?*

THE heathen expectations of a deliverer I ventured in my preceding lecture to characterise as “the unconscious prophecies of heathendom;”—prophecies indeed which knew not at what they pointed, of which the lines were most wavering and indistinct when set beside the clear outlines of Jewish hope—yet in a wider and laxer sense prophecies still; or if we will not make that word common, but reserve it for the highest of all, we may call them the world’s divination at the least. For in these expectations the world, being God’s world still, was divining what it needed, and feeling after it. And this divination, these guesses at, and reachings out after, the truth, so far from shunning and keeping out of sight, we may use,

I said, not of course putting them in the forefront of our array, yet may we use them still as arguments for that Faith, to which all has thus tended from the first, which the world was craving for before it received, and short of which it never found its perfect satisfaction or rest.

For as the early apologists, arguing it might be with Gnostic or Manichean, pointed out how the Christian revelation as the Church received it, rooted itself deeply in an anterior constitution, was evidently not a sudden improvisation, but the culminating fact of an idea which had been realizing itself through all the sacred history of the past, was as the perfect flower of which all genuine Judaism had been the stalk and stem, and as they founded on this traceable connexion the superiority of its claims to those of all rival systems, which could produce no such accordance of their new with pre-existing and pre-established harmonies in the spiritual world, which rather had abruptly and violently to force a place for themselves, than to fit into one already prepared for their reception, which rested on an undoing and denying of the past, rather than a sanctioning and perfecting of it*—and as there

* See especially Tertullian *Adv. Marcion.*, l. 3 and 4, *passim*, in which this is his ever-recurring thought, re-appearing in an infinite variety of forms.

is a most real force in their argument,—exactly so has it for the thoughtful mind a deep significance, that Christ should have met and satisfied all nobler longings of the heathen world—that all deeper and better impulses which were anywhere at work, should have been tending towards *Him*. The worth of the unspeakable gift which in Christ is ours, is wonderfully testified by the fact that all should have been in one way or another either asking for that gift, or dreaming that they had gotten it, or mourning its departure, or providing substitutes for it—that however in the one elect people, as the bearers of the divine promises, the beating heart of the spiritual world, the appointed interpreters to the rest of their blind desires, this longing after a Redeemer came out in greater clearness and in greater strength, with no troubling disturbing elements,—*their* education being far more directly from God, and being expressly aimed at the quickening of these longings to the highest,—yet were those longings themselves not exclusively theirs. They, indeed, yearned, and knew what they yearned for: the nations yearned, and knew not for what.

But still they yearned: for as the earth in its long polar night seeks to supply the absence of the day by the generation of the northern lights, so does each people in the long night of its heathen darkness bring forth in its yearning

after the life of Christ, a faint and glimmering substitute for the same. From these dreamy longings after the break of day have proceeded oracles, priests, sacrifices, lawgivers, and the like. Men have no where given up hoping; or acquiesced in the world's evil as the world's law. Everywhere they have had a tradition of a time when they were nearer to God than now, a confident hope of a time when they should be brought nearer again. No thoughtful student of the past records of mankind can refuse to acknowledge that through all its history there has run the hope of a redemption from the evil which oppresses it; nor of this only, but that this hope has continually linked itself on to some single man. The help that is coming to the world, it has ever seen incorporated in a person. The generations of men, weak and helpless in themselves, have evermore been looking after one in whom they may find all which they seek vainly in themselves, and in those around them—redressers of the world's wrong, deliverers from the world's yoke, vindicators of the honour of the race, souls of heroic stature, in which all the features of greatness that are scantily strewed in others shall be found gloriously combined. Such in almost every religion men have learned to look back to, as having already come: such we find that they are everywhere expecting, as yet to appear.

As little can one deny that there is that in men, which prepares them to welcome these at their appearing. There is a natural gravitation of souls, which attracts them to mighty personalities; an instinct in man, which tells him that he is never so great as when looking up to one greater than himself—that he is made for this looking upward—to find, and, finding, to rejoice and be ennobled in a nobler than himself. And doubtless this instinct in itself is divine. It is the natural basis on which the devotion of mankind to Christ is by the Spirit to be built; it is an instinct which, being perfectly purified of each baser admixture, is intended to find its entire satisfaction in Him. True, it may stop short of Him; true, it may turn utterly away from Him. It may stop short of Him, resting in human heroes, in men glorious for their gifts, eminent for their services to their kind; and we have then the worship of genius instead of the worship of God. Or it may turn utterly away from Christ, and then, being in itself inextinguishable, and therefore surviving even in those who have wholly forsaken Him, it will, thus perverted and depraved, lay them open to all the delusions of false prophets and anti-christs.

For it is this, this attraction of men to a mightier than themselves, thus perverted, which

has filled the world with deceivers and deceived; which has gathered round the hunters of men the ready instruments which have executed their will. It is this which has drawn souls, as moths to the candle, to rush into and to be scorched and to be consumed in the flame, which some wielder of heavenly gifts for hellish aims has kindled. It is this which swells the train round some conqueror's car, as he urges his destructive course through the world. What for instance, to take a near illustration, was the devotedness of the French soldiery to their great leader but this? who does not feel that this devotion, out of which thousands and tens of thousands were ready to meet, and did joyfully meet, dangers and fatigues and agonies and deaths, only for the hope of one word of approbation, one smile from him, counting all more than repaid by these—who does not feel that this was the inverted tide of something in itself most true and most noble, to which even in its degeneracy it bore witness; and only had now run wild and lost its appointed destination? It is this, this craving of men passionately to devote themselves to some one, which makes an Anti-christ possible, which will make him so terrible when he appears—men by a just judgment of God being permitted to dedicate all which they ought to have dedicated to Christ, to his

opposite—to him who comes in his own name, because they refused to give it, because they refused to give themselves, to Him who came in the name of his Father. It will then be seen that there can be an enthusiasm of hell, as well as an enthusiasm of heaven.

And as on the one side there is a preparedness to acknowledge these kings of men, these spiritual and intellectual chiefs of our race, so soon as they shew themselves, thus too upon the other hand, such have never been wanting to claim the reverence and the homage of their fellows, to seat themselves on these thrones of the world. Certainly there is nothing in the study of the past which fills one with more awe and wonder than the infinite significance of single men in the development of the world's history. That history lies out before our eyes no Tartarian steppe, no Indian savannah, stretching out as one vast level, or with only slight elevations or depressions; but with marvellous inequalities, and here and there with mountain summits towering to the clouds. Everywhere we encounter those that bring to their brethren a new blessing or a new curse, that gather up as at a centre the world's light or the world's darkness; from whom that light or that darkness diffuses itself anew and with a new energy—beneficent lords or baleful tyrants in the spiritual kingdom of men's thoughts and feelings—each one for weal or for woe, in

narrower or wider circles, for longer or shorter spaces, wielding his sceptre over the hearts and spirits of his fellows; helping to make them slaves or to make them free. On the one side august lawgivers, founders of stable polities, bringers in of some new element of civilization, restorers even amid heathen darkness of some purer knowledge of God; on the other side, destroyers that have known how to knit to them as with magic bands multitudes of their brethren, and to make them the passionate servants of their evil will; proclaimers of sensual philosophies, that have helped to make our life cheaper than beasts, to empty it of its loftier hopes and its faith in an higher destination; seducers, after whom the world has wondered; stars whose name has been Wormwood, that falling from heaven, have made the waters of earth bitter, so that the men died who drank of them*.

Thus has it been, brethren, that the world has been ever opening wide its arms to welcome its redeemers, oftentimes cruelly deceived, counting oftentimes, like Eve, that it had gotten a man from the Lord, even him who should comfort it under the curse, when indeed it was thus welcoming only the deepener of the curse, and it may be the author of some new mischief;—yet hoping ever, with hopes that even at the best were only most

* Rev. viii. 10, 11.

imperfectly and inadequately fulfilled. Thus has the multitude of men still gathered round central figures in history, giving testimony even by an oftentimes fatal readiness for this, that mankind was made for a Christ, for one in whom it should be set free, by the mightier and holier magic of his will, by the prevalence of a diviner attraction which he should exercise upon them, from all the potent spells of seducing spirits and seducing men—that humanity was made for one to whom it should be able to deliver itself perfectly and without reserve, and to be blest in so delivering itself. For he being identical with righteousness, and wisdom, and love, they who lose themselves in Him, only lose to find themselves again for ever.

So much, brethren, we may say generally concerning the hope which the world has cherished of redeemers and saviours—a hope which at length was so fulfilled in Him, and only in Him who bears both these titles, that we well nigh feel as if the titles themselves, to say nothing of any deeper homage or devotion, cannot without wrong to Him, without encroachment upon his due honour, be lent to any other. And upon this day, brethren, upon this resurrection morn, it will fall in well with the joyful solemnities of the

time, with the current in which our thoughts must needs be running, and from which it would only be a loss if the discourse which you heard in this place should divert them for a while, to address ourselves to a part of the subject, which, had not this high day come upon us, might perhaps have been more conveniently reserved to a later occasion ; but which if now, moved by the fitnesses of the season, I a little anticipate, you will pardon me this wrong—I mean, the world's hope of its deliverers as conquerors of death—its expectation of One who should lead captivity captive, in whom mortality should be swallowed up in life, who should be a vanquisher of hell, a bringer back of souls, and first and chiefly of his own, from the prison-house of the grave.

Such expectations in abundance there were; for nowhere have men sat down content under the heavy laws of death which bound them. They have ever been imagining a reversal of the curse, a breach of those inexorable laws. The old world was ever feeling after “Jesus and the Resurrection.” And being full of this thought, it traced it every where. Thus in the cycle of the natural seasons, when the earth in spring starts up from its long winter sleep, men saw a symbol and a never-failing prophecy of life rising out of death: that winter was as the world's death, this spring

as the world's resurrection. The enthusiasm which the spring woke up, the rapture with which the outbursting of bud and blossom, the signs of the reviving year, were hailed—the way in which the chiefest and joyfulest feasts of almost all religions were coincident with, and evidently celebrated, this time, being full of this spring gladness,—this was not an evidence, as some would have us to believe, that those religions were merely physical, did merely commemorate the revolutions of the natural year. But this rapture and delight with which the outer tokens of renovation and revival were hailed, had their root in a deep sense of the connexion between man and nature, in a most true feeling that the symbols of renovation in nature could not be aimless and unmeaning, symbols of nothing, but must needs point to deeper realities in the life of man*. The spring-time suggested such joyful

* I may quote, though long, the sublime passage in Tertullian on the vestiges of a resurrection which we may trace everywhere in nature (*De Resurr. Carnis*, c. 12): *Dies moritur in noctem, et tenebris usquequaque sepelitur. Funestatur mundi honor; omnis substantia denigratur. Sordent, silent, stupent cuncta: ubique justitium est. Ita lux amissa lugetur: et tamen rursus cum suo cultu, cum dote, cum sole, eadem et integra et tota universo orbi reviviscit; interficiens mortem suam, noctem; rescindens sepulturam suam, tenebras; heres sibimet existens, donec et nox reviviscat, cum suo et illa suggestu. Redaccenduntur enim et stellarum radii, quos matutina succensio extinxerat: reducuntur et siderum absen-*

solemnities, because it was felt to be in some sort the Easter of nature, and obscurely to give pledge, or at least intimation, of an higher Easter in store for man.

And if it may be permitted me to take a little wider range, and to gather proofs and confirmations of what I am affirming, of the manner in which human nature has claimed a resurrection as its own, not from the heathen world only, but wherever in popular faith or tradition I can find them, I would then adduce, as a remarkable illustration of this, the exceeding difficulty with which the world has ever persuaded itself of the death of any who have mightily blest it, or with whom it has confidently garnered up its dearest hopes—

tiæ, quos temporalis distinctio exemerat: redornantur et specula lunæ, quæ menstruus numerus attriverat: revolvuntur hyemes et æstates, verna et autumnæ, cum suis viribus, moribus, fructibus. Quippe etiam terræ de cœlo disciplina est arbores vestire post spolia, flores denuo colorare, herbas rursus imponere, exhibere eadem quæ absumpta sunt semina; nec prius exhibere, quàm absumpta. Mira ratio! de fraudatrice servatrix: ut reddat, intercipit; ut custodiat, perdit; ut integret, vitiat; ut etiam ampliet, prius decoquit...Nihil deperit, nisi in salutem. Totus igitur hic ordo revolubilis rerum, testatio est resurrectionis mortuorum. Operibus eam præscripsit Deus antequàm literis; viribus prædicavit antequàm vocibus. Præmisit tibi naturam magistratam, submissurus et prophetiam, quo facilius credas prophetiæ, discipulus naturæ; quo statim admittas, cùm audieris quod ubique jam videris, nec dubites Deum carnis etiam resuscitatorem, quem omnium noris restitutorem.

the eagerness with which it snatches at the thought, that such a one has not truly died, making much of the slightest hint that seems to give a colour to this; so congenial is it to the heart of man. It was said of Moses, "No man knoweth his sepulchre unto this day," (Deut. xxxiv. 6,) and these words, despite the plain declaration that went before, were sufficient motive for a whole family of Jewish legends to the effect that he had not really paid the debt appointed to every man living. In like manner we know how that word of the Lord concerning the beloved apostle, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" this was enough to cause the report to go forth that he should not die; and not the express denial by St. John himself of any such significance in the words, was able to extinguish this belief, which continued to propagate itself from age to age.

In like manner we sometimes see a whole nation which has found it impossible to believe that he on whom its hopes were fondly built, whom it had trusted should at this time have delivered it, and with whose death those hopes have all fallen to the ground,—that he indeed has come, like other men, under the law of mortality—has passed away, and left his work, as it seems, unfinished. How long Britain was waiting for her Arthur—

how long did the legends that told of him as surviving yet in the far valley of Avalon live on the lips and in the hearts of a people. And exactly in the same manner, in a later and more historic age, Portugal waited for her youthful king, looked fondly and with aching expectation for his return—and this, for many a weary year after he had perished not obscurely, but in open fight, among the sands of Afric.

And may not some of us have known, brethren, in our own experience something that quite explains to us this difficulty of believing in death? Have we not found this difficulty ourselves? how, when the loved are gone, when they have left their places empty, it is only by repeated efforts that we can realize to ourselves that it indeed is so—how we have to say again and again to hearts half incredulous still, that it will never again in this world be otherwise—that so much truth and faith and love have indeed been withdrawn from hence and for ever. Thus earnestly does the spirit of man protest even against the semblance of annihilation, which death seems to wear.

Nor need it of necessity be the loved or hoped in, those in whom the expectations of others have intensely centered: let it be only some terrible man, one that has curdled the

life-blood of the world with fear; and even such a one as this, having once been so much to men, though only so much to their fears, they will hardly be persuaded to have indeed past away from the earth which so quaked and shuddered at his tread. To take an instance familiar to most of us—how long after the death of Nero did the firm persuasion survive, that he was only hidden for a season, and that the earth should once more be cursed with his presence—the Christians of the Roman Empire giving this expectation a colouring natural to them, and conceiving of him as the antichrist, who should make presently his terrible re-appearance from the East, to carry forward against them the work of blood which he had commenced*.

But to return to the sphere more directly marked out for me by my subject, and to look there for evidences of the manner in which the spirit of man is incredulous of death, witnesses, protests against it, as by a second sight sees what shall be in the fulness of time, and prematurely grasps at it,—what frequent mention in the Greek fable we meet of visitors of Hades, of those that have descended and held intercourse with the spirits there, those who

* Tacitus, *Hist.* l. 2, c. 8; Suetonius, *Nero*, c. 57; Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, l. 20, c. 19; Lactantius, *De Mort. Pers.* 2.

have in a sense “preached to the spirits in prison,” and then returned from the kingdom of night—or it may be burst for others, as well as for themselves, the gates and barriers of the grave, rescuing and bringing back from that dark region to the glad light of life some delivered soul. I may spare any great details in proof of this; time would not allow them; such might scarcely seem in place; and in a congregation like the present they would be evidently superfluous. By one example only I would indicate that which I mean, but that example the most illustrious which ancient fable supplies. It is familiar to us all how the great cycle of the labours of Hercules was not finished till he had done battle with death. Earthly exploits, even the mightiest of these, were not sufficient. It was felt, and most truly, that to complete even the idea of the hero-champion of men, something more was needed, a greater victory was demanded at his hands: he must wrestle with and in personal conflict overcome foes mightier than those of flesh and blood—even the last enemy, death and the grave. Nor even then had his own life attained its perfect consummation: since for this it was needed that all which was of earth in himself should be burned out, that the dregs of mortality should be cleansed away in the purifying flames of a funeral pyre, willingly

ascended—and this being done, that he himself, in sign that he could not die any more, that he was indeed made partaker of immortality, that death could have no more dominion over him, should be wedded to eternal youth amid the mansions of the gods*.

Such, no doubt, is the interpretation of this pregnant symbol; and thus, brethren, by a thousand voices, in a thousand ways, the world has been declaring that it was not made for death, for that strange and alien thing, which, notwithstanding, it found in the midst of it. Thus has it looked round for one who should roll away the stone from the door of that sepulchre, to which it had seen its sons one after another unreturningly descend; and eking out the weakness of its arguments for immortality by the strength of its desires, it has been forward to believe that for this one and that the stone had been actually rolled away. But yet presently again, it has felt only too surely that it had but the shadow, and not the very substance of the things hoped for: and in doubt and perplexity, in despond-

* In Buttmann's *Mythologus*, v. 1, p. 252 seq., the higher significance of the whole mythus of Herakles is unfolded with an exquisite tact and beauty. Without entering into the merits or demerits of other parts of the book, it may yet be as well to say that it is only this single treatise which I wish to speak of in this language of admiration.

ency and fear, has made the words of the Psalmist its own : “ Dost thou shew wonders among the dead ? Shall the dead rise up and praise thee ? ” But, unlike to him, it has not known what answer to give to its own question.

And so it went on, until at length, after many a false dawn, the world's Easter morning indeed broke, and from beside an empty tomb they went forth, the witnesses of Jesus, preaching Him and the resurrection ; able to declare things which they had seen—that there was indeed a risen Head of our race, one who had tasted death for every man, who, not in poet's dreams, but in very deed, had burst its bands, because it was impossible He should be holden by them ; that there was one for whom death was what men had so often, and so fondly and significantly called it—even a sleep ; for He had laid Him down and slept, and after his three days' rest in the grave, risen up again, because the Lord had sustained Him. The day at length arrived, when men were able to go forth, preaching Him who had shewn himself alive by many infallible proofs ; in whom too, being risen, mortality *was* swallowed up in life ; and who was now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, angels and principalities and powers being made subject unto Him.

Such was the word of their message—that

the stone *was* rolled away, that the riddle of death *was* solved; and hearts unnumbered welcomed the message, expanded themselves to it, as flowers, shut through some long dreary night, unfold themselves to the warmth and the light of the returning day. And shall not we, brethren, bear our part in the great jubilee which that message of theirs has summoned the world to keep, in the glory and gladness of this day and of this day's mystery, before which all phantoms and shadows of the night flee away, before which all sadness and despair are weak to stand? Truly, with a deep insight into the mystery of this Easter morn, did the great poet of our modern world make the Easter hymn—the glad voices which said *Christ is risen*, these, caught by accident, of potency sufficient to wrest the poison-cup untasted from the hand of the despairing one, who had already raised it to his lips.

How, brethren, is it with ourselves? Is that word for us a scatterer of sadnesses, a quickener of joys? Does it enable us to put off the sackcloth of our spirit, and to gird ourselves with gladness? Let us earnestly ask ourselves this question; for surely it is a sign that all is not right with us, when other things make us glad, but not this—when the natural spring fills our hearts with a natural joy, but this with no spiritual—when we stand aloof, cold

and unsympathizing, as the wondrous cycle of the Christian year goes round, as the great events of our Lord's life and death and resurrection and glory succeed one another in a marvellous order; not humbling ourselves in the humiliations of that life, and so not exulting in its triumphs; never having stood beside the cross of Jesus, and so having no right and no desire to stand beside that open tomb where he reared his first, his great trophy over death. If we feel not this gladness, let us take shame to our dull hearts, and ask it as a gift from God, which he will not deny us. Let us ask that we too may be borne upward and borne onward on the great stream of the Church's exultation. Let us ask this earnestly; let us ask it as something which we ought not to be without; for of this let us be sure, that now, after eighteen hundred years, that announcement of the angel, "He is not here, but is risen," *should be* as fresh and new, as full of an unutterable joy to us, as it was to those weeping women, who came to pay the last sad honours to their dead Lord, but found only his empty and forsaken grave.

LECTURE III.

THE SON OF GOD.

ACTS XIV. 11.

And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

IT was my endeavour when we last met, to trace out the manner in which humanity has ever been looking in one quarter or another for its redeemers and saviours—for deliverers from physical, deliverers from moral evil. Carrying forward my subject a step, it will be now my aim to shew how it has not merely been *heroic* men, men who triumphed over all, even death itself, but *divine* men, for whom the world has been craving; in whom it has felt deeply that its help must lie—a most true voice of man's spirit ever telling him that only from heaven the true deliverance of the earth could proceed. We shall see how men have been ever cherishing the conviction of a *real* fellow-

ship between earth and heaven, and *that* not merely an outward one, but an inward ; that the two worlds truly *met*, not by external contact only, but in the deeps of personal life, in persons that most really belonged and held on to both worlds. We shall see how the world, with all its discords, has had also its preludes to the great harmonies of redemption ; has had its incarnations—sons of God, that have come down to live a human life, to undertake human toils, to die a human death : its ascensions—sons of men, that have been lifted up to heaven, and made partakers of divine attributes—we shall see how men have never conceived of this world around us and of that world above us as totally dissevered, with an impassable gulf between them, but always as in living inter-communion one with the other.

And to this subject the words of my text will form an apt introduction, yielding, as they do, a signal testimony to a wide-spread faith through the heathen world in these living relations between heaven and earth ; for no sooner did those men of Lystra see in Paul and Barnabas beneficent healing presences, with power to chase away the sicknesses of men, than at once they leaped to the conclusion, “The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men,” and could hardly be restrained from offering them divine honours. The words themselves are a

noticeable evidence of the world's preparedness, even in that day when so much of an earlier faith had perished, to welcome its deliverer from heaven. Nor are we without a parallel evidence to the same in that exclamation of the awe-struck heathen centurion, who at sight of nature suffering with her suffering Lord, and setting her seal to the awful meaning of his death, could come to no other than a like conclusion, exclaiming, "Truly this was the Son of God."

For indeed this which is peculiar to our Christian faith, namely, that in it at length, and in it only, a real meeting-place between heaven and earth has been established in the person of Jesus of Nazareth—that the divine was born into the human, and so, not by transient and external contact, but in very deed, heaven came down to earth, and the earth was lifted up into heaven, God became a man, and man God—this, which is the peculiar prerogative and glory of our Christian faith, is yet not so peculiarly ours, but that every religion has, in some shape or other, made pretension to the same. It was claimed of all, though fulfilled only by one. "The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will be their God, and dwell among them"—this did in positive fulfilment only in the Only-begotten come true; yet, as far as the idea reaches, is the essence and

centre, not of one religion, but of all. Men may conceive it under different aspects, may imagine it to be brought about in various ways; some of these ways will approach nearer to the heart of the matter than others; but this idea, in one shape or another, must constitute the central one of every religion.

I will endeavour to trace a few proofs of this, as in the heathen religions of antiquity they meet us everywhere,—to hold up before you a few forms in which, with more or less distinctness, men expressed their desire after, or embodied their belief in, this fellowship,—and more than fellowship, this union between God and man; and then to shew how far short, even in idea, not to speak of the realization of that idea, all which men ever conceived in this way fell of the actual fact upon which the Church is founded.

And first, would we trace what is nearest to a nation's heart, we should turn to its poetry; there we shall find not what it has, but what it is reaching after—not its actual work-day world, but that ideal world after which it is longing. If, then, we turn to the oldest, the epic, poetry of Greece, we behold heroes and gods and men mingling familiarly together. In this free intercourse, in this beaten and well-trodden way between earth and heaven, we have what we might venture to call the

heathen counterpart to the heavenly ladder seen by Jacob in dream, on which angels were ascending and descending, with the Lord himself at the summit; even as that was but the weak intimation of a closer union between earth and heaven to be effected in the person of the Son of man—an union wherein God should no longer appear at the summit of the ladder, but at its foot—no longer a God far off, but near;—men now at last beholding the “heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

We may select one instance more, which Greek art will supply, of the sense of so intimate relations between God and man, as only the Incarnation could at length adequately express. We oftentimes take it as a matter of course, one which therefore excites in us no reflection or surprize, that the statues of the Grecian gods should be in human forms, in the perfection of human grace and beauty—the highest which the skill of artist could attain. And yet, what a wonderful thing was this,—to have arrived at the conviction that the human was the most adequate expression for the divine—that if God did reveal himself, it would be as man—that the nearest approximation to the ideal of of humanity was the worthiest type of the Godhead. These too in their kind we must regard as prophecies of the Incarnation; not, indeed,

of the deeps of that mystery, but weak prophecies of it still.

Not, however, in the ideal world of art only did this faith find utterance, but in the actual world as well. The whole scheme of an Oriental court, and eminently that of the Great King, was laid out on the idea that it was the visible representation of the court of heaven, and the king himself a visible incarnation of the highest God. The sense of this speaks out in every arrangement, in the least as in the greatest, and is the key to them all. Thus, the laws of that kingdom when once uttered, could not be reversed or changed, (Dan. vi. 8,) because the king who gave them was the incarnation of God, and God cannot repent, or go back from what he has said*. None, as again we learn from the Book of Esther (iv. 11), might come into the king's presence unbidden

* God is *ἀτρέπτος*, his counsels *ἀμεταμέλητα*, and he not a man that he should repent; and even such his visible representative on earth must be. It was on this unchangeableness of what had once gone forth from the lips of the king, which itself was thus no capricious state rule, but grew out of the very idea on which the Persian monarchy rested, that the enemies of Daniel founded their confident expectations of success in their conspiracy against him. (Dan. vi. 8, 15.) So, too, when the purposes of Ahasuerus the king were altered concerning the Jews, he yet could not reverse the edict which permitted them to be attacked by their enemies: he could only give another edict, allowing them to stand upon their defence. (Esth. viii. 10, 11.)

and live, save by a distinct act of grace. They must die, unless the golden sceptre, in token of this grace, was held out to them; because none but the pardoned can behold the countenance of God and not perish at its intolerable brightness. So, as that same Book teaches us, it was forbidden to one clothed in sackcloth to enter within the palace (iv. 2), and this, because heaven, of which that palace was the image, is the region of life and gladness, not of sorrow or of death; which, therefore, neither themselves, nor in their symbols, might enter there. The seven princes of whom we read, that stood nearest to the throne and saw the king's face (i. 14), corresponded to the seven highest angels that were supposed to stand before, and nearest to, the throne of God. Nor was the adoration offered to the Persian king a mere act of homage or sign of fealty, but was most truly, and in the highest sense, *a worshipping*; and exactly because felt as such, was so earnestly resisted, though from different motives, by the Greek alike and the Jew—by the Greek, as dishonouring to himself, by the Jew, as dishonouring to his God. It was a worshipping of the king's person for the presence of God, which was supposed to dwell singularly in him.

Again, when the foremost place in all the earth had passed into the possession of another,

what was the apotheosis of a Roman Cesar, in life, or after death, but a troubled speaking out of men's sense, that he who stood in the forefront of humanity, the chiefest of the sons of men, should also be more than man? This, in itself most true, did only become the fearful blasphemy it was, when the worship was misapplied, and the object to which it was due had been mistaken. It was indeed an irony of the heathen world, and of its magnificent pretensions, worthy of the great author of mischief, when the honour that was owing from it to Christ the Lord, being diverted on the way, was rendered to a Nero or a Tiberius. Satan was herein mocking his votaries, exactly as he mocked the Jews, when they too incorporated their rejection of all that was best, and their choice of all which was worst, in an outward fact, in that cry of theirs—"Not this man, but Barabbas."

And I may perhaps be permitted to observe as not alien to our present argument, but as another striking proof of this craving of men for that which is given to them in Christ and in his Incarnation, for such a bridal of two worlds as was celebrated therein, that whenever, even in Christendom, men have lost their faith in this gift, or have suffered that faith to grow weak, then they have not rested till they have created for themselves a substitute for that truth

which thus they have let go. Thus, no sooner had their faith in a present, though invisible, Head of his Church waxed feeble—no sooner did the God-man, because he could not be seen or touched or handled, appear far off to carnal and sense-bound generations, than they began to yearn for a substitute who should give them all which they no longer felt that they possessed in Him. And thus men began to lend questionable honours and ambiguous titles to a pope; and ever as they lost their sense of the reality of Christ's headship more, they lent more of the glories of Christ, of his names, his honours, his divine attributes, to the man who had placed himself in his seat, and seemed to give them in palpable form that connexion between earth and heaven, which they were intended to have found in Him of whom it is written, "The Head of every man is Christ."

Exactly in the same way a thoughtful observer of the progress of Unitarianism in our own day, will not have failed to note how that system which shrinks from saying "Christ is God," yet finds it impossible to rest in that denial, and is rapidly and inevitably hastening to say, even as it has already said plainly enough by the lips of its most ardent advocates, "Man is God;" giving in the end to every man that which it started with affirming it was blasphemy to give to any, even unto Christ. And

were that, or any other yet barrenner form of unbelief, to succeed for a time in emptying the throne in men's hearts wherein the Son of God is sitting, on the instant we should behold impious and frantic enthusiasts springing up on every side, claiming the vacant seat, and obtaining too the homage which was withholden from Him. For truly, our deliverance from superstition lies not in unbelief, but in faith. In holding fast the truth, and only in that, are we delivered from its distorted counterfeit. Thus the Holy Eucharist, satisfying as it does the solemn and mysterious cravings of the human soul, delivers the Christian world from hateful mysteries and dark orgies. Thus, again, faith in the sacrifice once offered upon Calvary hinders and cuts off those hideous attempts at expiation, which, but for that, the sin-laden heart of man would inevitably devise for itself. And thus, too, an exalted Saviour preserves us from blasphemous usurpers of divine honours, the truth of God from the lie of the devil.

But let us see, brethren, what nearer to the heart of the matter the old world had, of incarnations and ascensions; let us see the highest form in which it presented these truths to itself. And coming to the highest, let us take note how the Christian truth of the Word made

flesh, *even as a doctrine*, was original—not to say, that alone in Christ it past from a speculation, and became a fact. It will be instructive to mark how all other systems not merely did not give what they professed to give (for that of course), but how even what they professed to give, fell short of, and was only an approximation to, the actual needs of humanity.

Thus the Greek mind could conceive of a much-suffering man lifted up for his toils' and virtues' sake into the highest heaven; their pantheon is full of such;—heroes after the toils and conflicts of a life worthily spent for their fellow-men, made free of heaven, and admitted even into the circle of the immortal gods; and so far they had in their popular belief anticipations of Him, the man Christ Jesus, whom, because He humbled Himself, and for our sakes became obedient to the death of the cross, therefore God greatly exalted, setting Him at his own right hand.

But yet how little was there here any true blending of the human and divine, and how truly men felt this; as is wonderfully testified by the fact that this exalted and glorified man, however many divine attributes were added to him, yet did not get the name of God; he was but a *δαίμων* after all; he was not, to use language which has been well used of the Son, *Deus ex radice*. They felt

with a right instinct that a deified man did not thereby, and that indeed he could not, become God—that no accumulation of divine honours could make one truly God, who was not such already; even as the Church, in a later day, was not to be deceived into accepting the Arian theory concerning the Son of God as an adequate substitute for her own, by the utmost prodigality of divine names and titles and honours which were proposed to be lavished upon Him. She felt rightly that all these would not in the least fill up the chasm that divided, and must divide for ever, God from that which was not God. So was it with the apotheosis of heroic men: the divine glory did but gild and play upon the surface of their being; if a man was to be also God, if there was to be any perfect union of the two, it must be by other means, by a process which must reach deeper and much further back than this.

But moreover the other half, the other factor, even of the idea of such a person as this, was altogether strange to the Greek mind. A God coming down from heaven, emptying himself of his glory, and in a noble suffering undertaking a human life, and, that he might be the helper and deliverer of men, enduring all, even the hardest, for them, tasting death itself,—all this, a God thus stooping, and suffer-

ing, and dying, was wholly alien to every conception of theirs. The very idea of the gods with them was that of beings free from all care, untouched by any sorrow, living ever joyful, and ever at ease : or if they sojourned for a while in this toilsome and tearful world, yet doing it as visitors only—not touching the burden of its woe with the tip of their finger—undertaking it might be human tasks, yet undertaking them in sport, not really coming under, or feeling their weight. True, indeed, that this conception of a suffering God, which was so strange to all western habits of thought, was familiar to the mythologies of the East. They have their Osiris,—and not him alone, though in him these sufferings of a divine nature come the most distinctly and gloriously out—who in the fulness of his beneficent purposes for the race of men, and in mighty and earnest conflict with the prince of evil, endures all things, going down even to the deeps of death : and thus, no doubt, the Eastern religions were not without their anticipations of Him, who though He was rich, yet made Himself poor, even the poorest, for us, that we through his poverty might be rich.

And yet how imperfect, even as regards the idea, was this too. Humanity, however it craved a God for its deliverer, yet craved just as earnestly a man ; it wanted a redeemer out



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of man, and meant to satisfy them all, could solve.

It seemed indeed that the world, craving one who should be man no less than God for its deliverer, put its demands in irreconcilable contradiction with themselves; and again, that demanding for its redeemer one in whom the human and divine should not slightly and transiently touch one another, but should be brought into innermost union, it here too required that which it was impossible that it ever should receive. And yet the same wonder-stroke of God solved both these problems. The first difficulty was this, If the world needed a man, yet where should it find the man that it needed? It had often put forth its champions, but there was ever found an attainer of blood in every man's descent, a blot on every man's scutcheon, a flaw in every man's armour. If no helper of humanity but one born out of its bosom would do, and yet every one born from thence, partook in its sin, was one needing to be healed, and who could not therefore be himself the healer, was a sharer in the diseased organism, and could not therefore expel its poison from others, whence was such a one to come? The answer was at length given in the Virgin-born. Men had long before had an obscure apprehension that only so could the difficulty be solved. The birth from a pure virgin had

been attributed to many. For there was that in men's hearts which told them that for one to be an effectual Saviour, he must be a new beginning, a new head of the race; not a mere link in the chain of sinful humanity, since of the sinful the Sinless could never come; but by such marvellous means as that miraculous conception he must be exempted from the corruption transmitted from generation to generation of the children of men.

But this was not all; this Virgin-born was also Immanuel, was that which men had asked for, "God with us." He had indeed a Father, but that Father was God; and thus in the deepest deep, in the innermost core and centre of his life, this man was also God. In the cradle of Bethlehem, when a pure Virgin had been touched with fire from heaven and had borne a Son, in Him at length the world found all its longings fulfilled, its seemingly irreconcilable desires all satisfied and atoned.

Thus, brethren, I have sought to trace out before you to-day that which was perhaps the worthiest element in the religions of the heathen world—that which, indeed, entitled them to the character of religions at all—their recognition, with all shortcomings and deficiencies, of a real bond between earth and heaven, their sense that the divine could reveal itself no

way so fitly as in the forms of the human, that the human could be lifted up to, and made to bear the weight of, the divine—that man was God's offspring, of the blood royal of creation. The pervading sense of this was indeed what mainly constituted them, in God's providence, preparations and predispositions for the absolute truth which should in fulness of time be revealed. For that there were upon these points certain predispositions for the reception of the truth in heathendom, which did not exist among the Jews, no one I think can deny. None can thoughtfully read the early history of the Church, and mark how hard the Jewish Christians found it to make their own the true idea of a Son of God, as indeed is witnessed by the whole Epistle to the Hebrews—how comparatively easy the Gentile converts; how the Hebrew Christians were continually in danger of sinking back into Ebionite heresies, making Christ but a man as other men, refusing to go on unto perfection, or to realize the truth of his higher nature;—no one can mark this, and contrast it with the genial promptness of the Gentile Church to embrace the offered truth, "God manifest in the flesh," without feeling that there must have been effectual preparations in the last which wrought its greater readiness for receiving and making its own this truth when it came; and what other could

they have been, but these which we have been tracing*?

It is true that there was with this, infinitely too feeble a sense, too feeble even in the best, of the manner in which sin had cast them down from the high places of their birth—a confession far too weak and wavering, for none but the Holy Ghost could have wrought a right confession, of that attainder that was in their blood, the utter forfeiture of their inheritance which their sin had brought about. It was not seen how man had ceased to be a Son of God, could never but by a new adoption, a regeneration, become such again. But man's divine original, his first creation in the image of God, was so firmly held fast to by all nobler spirits, that St. Paul upon the hill of Mars could at once take his stand on this as a great meeting point between himself and his Athenian hearers—as the ground which was common to them and him: “Certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.” (Acts xvii. 28.) Here at least they were at one.

* The Christian apologists often find help here. Thus Arnobius, (*Adv. Gen.* l. 1, c. 37): *Natum hominem colimus. Quid enim, vos hominem nullum colitis natum? Non unum et alium, non innumeros alios quinimmo non omnes quos jam templis habetis vestris, mortalium sustulistis ex numero, et cœlo sideribusque donâstis? He could appeal to such passages as that of Cicero, (*Tusc. Quæst.* l. 1, c. 13): *Totum prope cœlum nonne humano genere completum est?**

And, brethren, it is possible that we may learn a lesson, or at least remind ourselves of truths which we are in danger of suffering to fall too far back in our minds, by the contemplation of those, who amid all their errors and darkness and confusion and evil, had yet a sense so deeply imprinted, a faith so lively, that man was *from* God, as well as *to* God, capable of the divine, only because himself of a divine race. Oftentimes it would seem as if our theology of the present day almost lost sight of this, or at least held it but with too feeble a grasp; beginning as it so often does from the fall, from the corruption of human nature, instead of beginning a step higher up—beginning with man a liar, when it ought to have begun with man the true image and the glory of God.

And then, as a consequence, the glory of Christ's Incarnation, of his taking of humanity, is only imperfectly apprehended. That is considered in the main as a makeshift for bringing God in contact with man; and not to have been grounded on the perfect fitness of man, as the image of God, of man's organs, his affections, his life, to be the utterers and exponents of all the life, yea, of all the heart of God. It is oftentimes considered the chief purpose of Christ's Incarnation, that it made his death possible, that it provided him a body in which

to do that which merely as God he could not do, namely to suffer and to die; while some of the profoundest teachers of the past so far from contemplating the Incarnation in this light, have rather affirmed that the Son of God would equally have taken man's nature, though of course under very different conditions, even if he had not fallen—that it lay in the everlasting purposes of God, quite irrespective of the fall, that the stem and stalk of humanity should at length bear its perfect flower in Him, who should thus at once be its root and its crown. But when the Incarnation is thus slighted, it follows of necessity, that man as man is thought meanly of, when indeed it is only man as fallen man, as separated by a wilful act of his own from God, to whom this shame and dishonour belong. In his first perfection, in the truth of his nature, he is the glory of God, the image of the Son, as the Son is the image of the Father, declaring the Son as the Son declared the Father:—surely a thought, brethren, which if we duly lay to heart, will make us strive that our lives may be holy, that our lives may be noble, worthy of Him who made us after his image, and when we had marred that and defaced it, renewed us after the same in his Son.

LECTURE IV.

THE PERFECT SACRIFICE.

MICAH VI. 6, 7.

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

THERE are few things more mysterious, brethren, than the prevalence of the rite of sacrifice through the world. Nations which it is impossible could have learned it of one another, nations the most diverse in culture, the highest in the scale, and well nigh the lowest, differing in every thing besides, have yet agreed in this one thing, namely, in the offering of things which have life to God,—or when the idea of the one God has been lost,—to the gods many of heathenism—the essential of that offering in every case being that the life of the victim was rendered up. And they have all agreed in

considering that this act of theirs had a value, that it did place upon a new and better footing the relations in which they stood to the heavenly powers; that by these sacrifices they might more or less re-constitute the relations between themselves and God, which sin has disturbed, bringing themselves nigher to Him, and rendering Him more favourable to them.

Now there are few or none in our day who would count that they had explained the prevalence of these convictions, in the conspiracy of the more artful few to hold the simpler many in bondage. These convictions were too wide spread, too universal; moreover, men were too direfully earnest in carrying them out, for any such supposition as this. Sacraments they might be, and often were, of the devil, and not of God, but yet dreadful sacraments still—bonds and bands by which men knit themselves to one another, and knit themselves also to a spiritual world, if not to heaven, yet to hell. Those who explain them into artful contrivances, may so give witness for their own shallow insight into the past history of the world, for the absence of any deeper needs at work in their own hearts, since if there had been such, they would have suggested a profounder explanation; but the time is past when they will find any number of persons to accept their explanation as sufficient.

As little can *their* theory be historically justified, who trace up the existence of sacrifice to the rude notions about God which belonged to an early age; for then we should see a people, as it attained worthier views about God, gradually outliving and renouncing the practice of this rite. But, contrary to this, we find in the most cultivated nations the theory of sacrifice only the more elaborately worked out, the sacrifices themselves only multiplied the more. Here and there there might be found some savage tribe or horde, which had sunk below the idea and practice of sacrifice; though one in which, in one form or another, it did not survive, it would be difficult to point out; but nowhere a people that had risen above it. Here and there a philosopher may have set himself against the popular belief, but nowhere has he been able to change it; he has ever stood single and alone, and has as little carried with him the more thoughtful and deeper spirits of his time as the common multitude. He may have eloquently declaimed on the absurdity of supposing the gods would be pleased with the death-struggles of animals, with the blood of bulls and of goats; but there was ever something in men, though they might not be able to explain it to themselves, which told them that sacrifice had a significance and a meaning,

which a few plausible words could not get rid of or destroy.

Such, brethren, I think you will admit are the facts, for I speak to those capable of judging. Whether we turn to those pages of Greek and Roman literature, brought by our studies here especially before us, or whether we take a wider range within our ken, everywhere alike we encounter a consciousness upon man's part, that the relations between him and the powers in whose hands he is, have been interrupted and disturbed. The fact might be sometimes overlooked and forgotten by him in times of prosperity, but we see it evermore mightily emerging from the deep of his heart, when the judgments of offended heaven were evidently abroad. Everywhere, too, we encounter the effort by certain specific and definite acts of expiation and atonement to restore those disturbed relations again. "Without blood is no remission of sin," was a truth as deeply graven on the heart and conscience of heathen as of Jew.

For vast and complex as is the Jewish system of offering, yet it is not a greater body of sacrifice than we meet almost everywhere else, when we turn to the ritual of heathenism. That Levitical system is of course in every way more complete: it is an organic whole;

excluding all individual caprice, all too into which the true idea of sacrifice, when escaping from God's controul, would inevitably degenerate. Moreover it was no will-worship, but the appointed way in which God was to be sought, and not that in which men out of their own hearts imagined that they would seek Him. But with all this, it does not, I think, run into greater detail, nor take more entire possession of the whole life of man, nor demand a more continual recognition of a distance and separation from God which has need to be removed, than did the heathen systems of sacrifice with which it was surrounded, when we take them in their sum total, when we count up all their infinite forms and varieties. For doubtless it was meant that they too, by this their multitude and repetition, should give testimony against themselves, should witness as plainly as did the Jewish in the same way, for their own weakness and unprofitableness; since of them, too, we may say, that had they been effectual to do what they professed to do, "would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers once purged would have had no more conscience of sin?" But thus, by their endless multiplication, and by the confession of weakness contained therein, they pointed, though not with prophetic explicitness, yet still in their degree, away from themselves,

and *to* that one all-sufficient sacrifice once offered upon Calvary.

Nor need we, I think, brethren, when we look a little deeper into the matter, when we come to apprehend what was the central idea of sacrifice, be so much surprised, as at first we are, to find it this rite of an almost universal character. For then we perceive that it was no arbitrary invention, for which a thousand others might have been substituted as well; but rather that the essence of all religion lies in that of which sacrifice was the symbol—namely, in the offering up of self, in the rendering up of our will to the will of God, the yielding up of our life to Him as something which had been rebellious in time past, and therefore worthy to die, but of which we desire that the rebellion may cease, that so we may of his mercy receive it back a life pardoned and forgiven. The blood is the seat of the life, the seat therefore of the ἐπιθυμία, the desire, which in fallen man is a desire at variance with the will of God. In sacrifice, in the pouring out of the blood, is the symbolic rendering up of this rebellious principle; a confession that it is only worthy to die; that as the thing offered died, so the offerer might justly die—the act having of course only its true significance when the offerer did realize to himself what he did—rested not in the out-

ward work, but said to himself and to God, 'I stand in living communion with this which I offer; even as this blood, so I offer myself; dying that I may live; giving myself to Thee, that I may receive my true life back again at thy hands; losing my life that I may find it.' Of course, it is not to be supposed that each worshipper so distinctly gave to himself an account of what he was doing; but this more or less obscurely lay in the background of his mind, and gave a meaning to his act. Our ordinary use of the word sacrifice, shews how truly we have gotten to the innermost heart of its meaning; for it is ever used to signify the giving up of something dear. And what so dear as our self-will? The giving up of that is indeed the giving up of all.

But when we speak of the idea of sacrifice as being this giving up of the self-will, there may seem a difficulty in applying this, when we come to the great and only perfect sacrifice offered by Christ on the cross. Of course it was not there—no one would dare to suppose it was—the offering up of a *rebellious* will; we hardly dare speak of such a thing, though it be but to deny it. But it was the giving up of *his own* will—that will which had the liberty of choosing for itself what the Father had not chosen for it, but in the entire rendering up of which he realized the very central idea of all

sacrifice, which all that had gone before had only pointed at weakly: "Sacrifice and burnt-offering Thou wouldest not; then said I, Lo! I come to do thy will, O God." In other words, sacrifice and burnt-offering God was weary of—those shadows of the true; and Christ came to give the substance; and his actual pouring out of his soul to death was the outer embodiment of the inward truth, that this yielding of his will to his Father's reached to the uttermost, did not shrink from or stop short of the last and most searching proof to which it was put.

In sacrifice, then, was the confession of a life forfeited, and this confession incorporating itself in an act, wherein the forfeiture was actually carried out. This however is but half the idea of sacrifice: for it is ever this confession made in another. If a man had given himself to death, because he felt that he was worthy to die, he would but have involved his already confused relations to God in deeper confusion. He might be unworthy to live, but was not therefore at his own choice to die. If as a sinner, he owed God a death, yet as God's creature, made to serve Him, he equally owed Him a life. The premises are right, that man's life is forfeited; but the conclusion fearfully wrong, when he carries out himself and in his own person the forfeiture.

Such false conclusions from right premises they draw, the miserable victims that in our day fling their bodies to be crushed beneath the wheels of some idol car; the same they have drawn, who, in despair at the greatness of their sins, have lifted up their hands against their own life; for even self-murder, this most hideous perversion of the idea of sacrifice, yet grounds itself on a sense of life being the only worthy offering. Thus a Judas goes and hangs himself, because he feels his sin so great that it cannot be left without an atonement, and in the darkness and unbelief of his heart, he has put back the one atonement which would have been sufficient even for a sin so great as his; and this too is the thought of each other, who by a like fearful act of self-violence has denied the love, though he cannot deny the righteousness, of God.

Never then in himself, never by means of his own life, could man's acknowledgement that that life was forfeited rightly be carried out. It must needs be in another. And the same reason exists against making that other some fellow-man. His life too is a sacred thing, is itself an end. It could not therefore be used as this means to some other end. In human sacrifices, in the offering of other men's lives, there appear the same false consequences from right grounds as in men's offering of

their own. It remained that if sacrifice was to be, the sphere of animal life must be that of which it must take possession, and in which it must move—the next noblest life to man's, and therefore fitter than any meaner for the setting forth his oblation of himself. And man thus taking possession of this, either at God's express command, or moved by his own religious instincts, was indeed taking possession of that over which he had entire right, of that which was given him for the use of his body, much more for the spiritual needs of his soul.

Such, I think, we may venture to say was the normal unfolding of the idea of sacrifice; the abnormal appears in those revolting caricatures of the true idea, on which we have lightly touched—in human sacrifices—in dreadful self-oblations—in Baal priests cutting themselves with knives, and so pouring out, if not all, yet a part of their life—in the self-inflicted tortures and living death of Indian Fakirs—in the blind despair of mighty sinners, who with profane hand have broken in upon and laid waste the awful temple of their own lives.

Wonderful indeed, brethren, is the manner in which, armed with the truth, we may look upon past pages of the religious history of man, some of the most soiled and blotted, and decypher there an original writing of God, which all those stains and blots have not


availed to render illegible altogether*. If only we have an ear to hear, marvellous voices will reach us, and from quarters most unexpected, which shall speak *to us* of Calvary and of the cross, though they little mean it themselves—such voices for instance as his, who accounting for the human sacrifices of the Gauls, observed, that they were deeply persuaded that only the life of man was a fit redemption for man†. What was this conviction of theirs, but the dark side of that truth which the apostle to the Hebrews proclaimed, when he said that the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin, but that it must be purged away by better sacrifices than these? Nor do I think, brethren, that it will otherwise than repay us well to follow a little into detail the convictions of the world concerning that which constituted a sacrifice of worth, and trace how every thing here pointed, whether it meant it or not, yea, when it seemed most to point away from Him, to the central figure in the world's spiritual history, to the immaculate Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world.

* Tertullian (*De Animâ*, c. 41): Quod enim à Deo est non tam extinguitur quàm obumbratur. Potest enim obumbrari, quia non est Deus; extinguere non potest, quia à Deo est.

† Cæsar (*De B. G.*, l. 6, c. 16.): Pro vitâ hominis nisi hominis vita reddatur, non posse aliter deorum immortalium numen placari arbitrantur. Cf. Müller's *Dorians*, B. II, c. 8, § 2.

Thus it is hardly needful to observe, that it lay ever in the deepest convictions of men that an offering, to be acceptable, must be an offering of value, not something which cost the bringer nothing—that, while all was poor by comparison with Him to whom it was offered, or considered in relation to that for which it was offered, yet must it be the best which the offerer had;—not the lame and the blind, not the scanty gifts of a niggard hand;—he thus giving token, that if he had ought worthier, he would bring it. Therefore must the selected victim be pure of fault and of blemish, or, having such, was unfit for the altar—the sense of which was as lively in heathen sacrifice as in Jewish. Therefore was the bullock brought which had never yet submitted its neck to the yoke, the horse which had known no rider, or in Hindoo ritual, no touch even of man; in other words, that was brought which had not been already used and in part worn out in the service of the world, but which was thus wholly and from the first consecrated to heaven. Hence too, as the offering must not be a niggard one, the prodigality in sacrifice which startles us at times: the hecatombs of victims, the rivers of oil, the cattle from a thousand hills.

Herein too lay the explanation of yet direr sacrifice—as of their sons and daughters in the



Moloch-worship of the Phenicians—the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul—such offering, for instance, as we read of at Carthage, when instead of the cheaper substitutes with which they had satisfied themselves for long, they sought out, in the mighty peril of the city, the dearest things which they had, the choicest children of the noblest houses, and cast them into the brazen arms of that merciless idol, which their sin-darkened hearts had devised for their god*. Out of this same sense that an offering grew in worth with the worth of that which was offered, grew the rejoicing among the worshippers of Odin, when the lot of the yearly sacrifice fell upon no meaner man than the king—the pledge of a future felicity to the nation which was esteemed herein to lie. To what did all this reaching out after the worthiest, the purest, the choicest, the best, point, even in its dreadfulest perversions, but to Him who was the fairest of the children of men, the choicest which the earth had borne, the one among ten thousand, who yet, being such, did by the eternal Spirit offer Himself without spot to God—who being the anointed King of the world, was thus in a condition to make acceptable atonement for all men?

Nor less significant was the sense of a more

* Diodor. Sic., l. 20, c. 14.

prevailing atonement, of an added value which was imparted to an offering, when one, not thrust on by necessity, not compelled to die, but willingly offered himself; the feeling of which was so strong, that if not the reality, yet at least the appearance, of this willingness, was often by singular devices sought to be obtained. When, for example, the foremost man of a nation gathered upon his sole devoted head all the curses which impended on his people, all the anger of the immortal powers, and with that upon him gave himself to a willing death for all, so turning, it might be, into victory the tide of disastrous battle, what have we here but in its kind a reaching out after Him, the chief and champion of the race of men, whose life no man took from him, for He might have asked of his Father more than twelve legions of angels against his enemies—but who sanctified Himself, freely pouring out his soul unto death—and who, not that He might deliver some single people, but all the world, became the piacular expiation of that world, drew upon his own head the penalties which would else have alighted upon all, became a curse for man; and, when all was at the worst, when all seemed for ever lost, changed by his accepted death the certain defeat into the glorious victory of our race?

We may not refuse, brethren, to recognize

these references to the cross of Christ: we shall read history with little profit if we do. Nor need we fear the recognition; for it is the marvellous, and at the same time most natural, prerogative of Christianity, that, being the absolute truth, it *has*, or rather itself *is*, the touchstone to discover all true and all false, detects the truth which is hidden in every lie, finds witness for itself in that which oftentimes seems, and indeed is, most opposed to itself, is able to recognize in the tares of earth the degenerate wheat of heaven;—in the world's harshest discords, the wreck and ruin of God's fairest harmonies;—and in Satan himself, the lineaments of the fallen angel of God.

But besides the witness for the great coming sacrifice, which was contained in the sacrifices of heathenism, how mighty a sense of the cross of Christ, and of its significance, do we meet in other regions of ancient life. What a boding of it, for instance, forms the background of the Greek tragedy. How mysterious is the manner there in which from some far back transgression, some *πρώταρχος ἄτη*, the curse clings to a family, passes on from man to man, an ever-increasing load of transgression, until at length the great calamity, the headed-up guilt of all, lights *not* on the most, but on the least guilty head, on the head of one that by comparison is innocent. What

an unconscious symbol this of the curse cleaving to the Adamic race! For as in each lesser circle of that race we most often see the burden of the cross resting with the heaviest weight on the truest heart in that circle, so in the great circle of humanity we behold Him of the truest heart of all, the only unguilty One, bearing on the accursed tree the accumulated curse of the whole Adamic family, which had come down through long ages; and not merely bearing, but bearing it away. For as in those solemn and stately works of ancient art to which I alluded, mild breaths of reconciliation seem to make themselves felt, when once the curse has lighted, the expiation been made—not otherwise, and only far more gloriously, does the deep inner connexion between the judgment of the world and the forgiveness of the world appear in that death of Christ, which was at once judgment and forgiveness, in which the world was condemned, and in which, being condemned, the world was also forgiven.

But another evidence of the sacrifice of Christ, as that to which the world had been tending, lay in the endeavour of those who, after that sacrifice had been finished, would not accept it, to substitute something else of the same kind in its room. They felt that only so could they stand their ground, could they recover or maintain any hold upon the hearts of

men. With what monstrous exaggerations the idea and practice of sacrifice re-appeared in the final struggle of Paganism with the Christian faith, is abundantly known to every student of Church history—how for instance the apostate Julian, of whose life the revival of Paganism was the ruling passion, ran here into extremes which earned him the ridicule of the more lukewarm adherents of the old superstition themselves* ; and he, the same who had trod under foot the cross of Christ, and counted the blood with which he was sanctified a common thing, did yet submit himself to loathsome rites†, seeking in the blood of bulls profusely poured on him, as in a cleansing bath, that purifying which he had refused to find in the precious blood-sprinkling of the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world.

Again, the inner necessity of having somewhere a sacrifice to rest on, the certainty that if men have not the true, they will generate a substitute in its room, was signally proved by the manner in which the doctrine concerning the mass grew up in the Christian Church.

* See the manner in which Ammianus Marcellinus (l. 22, c. 12) speaks of the prodigality of his sacrifices. *Victimarius* was the title which was given him at Antioch, not apparently by the Christians alone.

† Those of the taurobolium. Prudentius (*Peristeph.* 10, 1006—1050,) gives a description at large of this revolting rite.

itself. No sooner did men's faith in a finished sacrifice, one lying at the ground of every prayer, every act of self-oblation, every acceptable work, grow weak, than the feeling that they must have a sacrifice somewhere, produced, or, so to speak, by instinct developed, a doctrine to answer their needs—turning that Holy Eucharist, which is the ever present witness in the Church of a sacrifice once completed on the cross, and for ever pleaded in heaven,—turning that *itself* into the sacrifice, and seeking to supply by these poor but continual repetitions, the weakness of their faith in the one priceless offering, upon the acceptance of which, as on an unchangeable basis, the Church everlastingly reposes.

And now, brethren, by way of practical conclusion from all this on which we have been entering to-day—what a witness is there here against that shallow view of the truth by which we are to be blest, which would leave it a bare doctrine, a system of morals, clearing away as superfluous and mystical, as a remnant of Judaism, all which speaks of atonement, of propitiation, of blood-sprinkling, of sacrifice. The contemplation of the benefits of Christ's death under aspects suggested by these words, so far from being this shred of Judaism, which a more perfect knowledge must strip off, finds

on the contrary as many anticipations everywhere besides as there. They are as busy about sacrifice in the outer court of the Gentiles, as in the holier place of the Jew; and as little there as here is it a separable accident, the garniture and fringe of something else, but in either case itself constituting the heart and middle point of worship, recognized in a thousand ways as that which must lie at the ground of all approaches unto God.

And these things being so, how can we escape from owning that some of the deepest, the most universal needs of the human heart have not yet been awakened in us, if we have never yet desired to stand under the cross, nor ever claimed our part in the great oblation which was made thereon, as on the holiest altar reared upon the earth—needs which that transcendant offering on Calvary was meant for ever and perfectly to satisfy? It is plain, brethren, that we are leading an outside life, playing but with the surfaces of things, never having brought ourselves in contact with inmost realities, that there never yet has risen upon our souls the awful vision of an holy God, that we have wholly shrunk from looking down into the abysmal deeps of our own corruption, if as yet we have never said, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” For when once we have

learned ought of this, we then surely feel that not amendment of life, that not tears of sorrow, that not the most perfect baptism of repentance, that not all these together, would of themselves reach our needs, or remove our stains, or give peace for the past, or confidence for the future; that only in the Lamb slain is there purity, or pardon, or peace.

Oh then, brethren, let us hasten there, where we may make that precious blood-sprinkling our own; let us hasten there, lest they rise up against us in the last day—those heathens, who set such a price on their sacrifices, which were at best but shadows of the true; who made by them such continual acknowledgement of guilt which they had contracted, of punishment which they deserved, of reconciliation which they desired; lest they rise up against us, condemning *us*, who shall have counted the blood with which we were sanctified a common thing, and brought into the awful presence of the Judge a conscience stained and defiled, which yet might have been purged and forever perfected by far better sacrifices than theirs.

LECTURE V.

THE RESTORER OF PARADISE.

GENESIS V. 29.

And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.

A WORD or two may be needful on commencing again these lectures, which, after the lapse of some months, I am permitted to resume; so I may hope to remind such among my present hearers as have heard the earlier discourses, and inform such as have not, what has been their course, and what the road we hitherto have travelled over. I have undertaken, then, to trace in a few leading lines the yearnings of the world which was before Christ, or which, though subsequent to Him, has yet lain without the limits of Christendom, and beyond the mighty influences of his word and Spirit, a world to which He was still therefore a Saviour to come—I have undertaken to trace the

yearnings of this whole world after its Redeemer, the presentiments of Him which it had. I have sought to shew that if there was much in the world, as in a fallen world there needs must have been, ready to resist and oppose the coming in of the truth, prompt to take up arms against it at its appearing, so also, on the other hand, in that it was a world which came first from God, and which had never been abandoned by Him, but which all along He had been in highest wisdom and highest love preparing for and leading to this glorious consummation, there were also certain predispositions for the truth, there was that also which was ready to range itself under the banners of that truth, so soon as once they were openly set up. I have endeavoured, too, to shew how the existence of unconscious prophecies of the truth, of resemblances in lower spheres of the spiritual life to that which at last was perfectly manifested in the highest, is only that which we should have expected; so that it is not the presence of these resemblances which need perplex us, but rather their absence which would have been justly surprising, which would have been indeed most difficult to account for.

I take up my subject at this point, and go forward to another branch of it, which is this—that in another aspect beside those which we have already contemplated, we have in



Christ our Lord "the Desire of all nations," inasmuch, that is, as we have in Him one who was at perfect understanding with nature, wielded it at his will, declared that He was come to restore it, to bring back the lost Paradise; and did not merely declare this in word, but by firstfruits of power exercised upon it, by the mighty works that He did, gave manifest tokens that He was come, at once to set *it* free from the bondage of corruption, and to set free the race of which He appeared as the Head from the blind tyranny which it exercised upon them—to give to his people something more than the Stoic freedom of opposing an intrepid and obdurate heart to the assaults of fortune, or the accidents of nature. For though that in its place was well, which should enable a man to say amid a falling world, *Impavidum ferient ruinæ*, yet better still his work, who should so bear up and strengthen and establish the shaken pillars of the universe, that wreck and ruin should find place in it no more.

But why, it may be asked, should this deliverance of nature have been, upon one side, part of the world's expectation, or why, which is in fact the same question on its other side, should the giving of this deliverance cohere so intimately, as we shall see it does, with Christ's redemptive work, as to be in fact one aspect

of that work itself? For this reason—because of the closest connexion in which the disorder from which the redemption was expected, stood related to the sin of man. That disorder was felt truly to be the echo in nature of the deeper discords in man's spiritual being. When man sinned, then in the profound and not exaggerated language of our great poet, "All nature felt the wound." Man was as the highest note in the scale of creation, and when he descended, through all nature there followed a corresponding reduction. It became subject to vanity, not willingly, not by an act of its own will, but by reason of another, by reason of him who subjected the same, by reason of man. (Rom. viii. 20). We behold the fact itself on all sides acknowledged, the fact, I mean, of a primal perfection, of a present disorder. Of the sense of primal perfection we have singular witness in the language (and there is no such witness as the unconscious one which language supplies) of two the most highly cultivated nations of the ancient world, whom all the present confusions of nature could not hinder from using words signifying *order* and *elegance** to designate the world which they

* Κόσμος and *mundus*. Pliny, (*H. N.*, l. 2. c. 3): Quem κόσμον Græci, nomine *ornamenti* appellaverunt, eum nos à perfectâ absolutâque *elegantiâ* mundum. Pythagoras is said to have been the first who applied the word κόσμος to the material universe.

beheld around them ;—so to them did this grace and beauty gleam through its present disorders, so instinctively did they feel these to belong to the true idea of the universe, grievously as that was now defaced and marred. While with all this, on the other hand, its present disorders appeared so great, its discords so harsh, that the philosophic poet found, as he thought, warrant and ground enough in these for his atheist conclusion, that no hand of Eternal Wisdom presided at its planning, that no final causes could be traced throughout it, but that all was the work of a blind chance*. Not indeed that conclusion of his, yet this much was true, that Paradise *had* disappeared from the earth ; and man, the appointed prince of creation, did stand among the rebel powers of nature, which had cast off *his* yoke, at the moment when he cast off the yoke of his superior Lord, practising *upon* him, by a just judgment, the disobedience and the contumacy which it had learned *from* him ; and which did now, with its thorns and its briars, its wastes and its wildernesses, its earthquakes and its storms, present him too faithful a reflex of the sin and evil of his own heart.

Yet nevertheless, though Paradise was gone, he kept in his soul the memory of that which

* Lucretius :

Nequicquam nobis divinitus esse paratam
Naturam rerum, *tantâ stat prædita culpâ.*

once had been, and with the memory, the confidence and the hope that it would yet be again—that perhaps, though *his* eyes could see it nowhere, it yet had not wholly vanished from the earth. If there bloomed no Paradise in the present, at least there lay one before him and behind. If it lay not near him, yet in the distance,—in the happy Iran,—among the remote Hyperboreans,—in the far land of the blameless Ethiopians. He felt, indeed, that he was himself weak to win it back, but he could not resign the trust that a champion would arise, and accomplish for him that which he was unequal to accomplish for himself. Nor was it only when the son of Lamech was born that men said in a joyful expectation, “This same shall comfort us because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.” Of many more the same hope was fondly conceived. The world could hardly picture to itself any one of its leading spirits, of the great benefactors of the past, the mighty deliverers in the future, without thinking of the curse upon the earth as more or less lightened in his time and by his aid. For it truly understood that however the resistance which we find in nature, a resistance so stubborn that only with long labour and toil we make it subject to our will, may be part of the needful discipline of the present time—may be, though not good in itself, yet good for our present condition, and something

which we could not be without—still that release from all this, from this resistance and contradiction of the outward world, is a portion of the blessedness in store, not indeed so much for its own sake, as because it will go hand in hand with, and be the outward expression of, another and greater healing and deliverance in the inner domain of men's spirits.

This yearning after a lost Paradise, this belief that it should some day or other be restored, we find existing everywhere, and, as was to be expected, in the worthier religions the most vividly. Thus it comes out with a remarkable strength and distinctness in that which has so many noble elements in it, which is in many respects so free from the more debasing admixtures of the other worships of heathendom—I mean the religion of the ancient Persians. Through that all there runs the liveliest expectation of a time when every poison, and poisonous weed, should be expelled from the earth, when there should be no more ravening beast, nor fiery simoom, when streams should break forth in every desert, when the bodies of men should cast no shadows, when they should need no food to sustain their life, when there should be no more poverty, nor sickness, nor old age, nor death.

And what is most remarkable, and makes these expectations to belong to our argument is, that not in Jewish prophecy alone were

these hopes, and the fulfilment of these hopes, linked with, and consequent upon, the coming of a righteous King, one of whom righteousness should be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins, who should reprove with equity for the meek of the earth (Isai. xi. 4, 5); but in *all* the anticipations upon all sides of these blessings to men, they were thus connected with the expectation of a king reigning in righteousness. In his time, and because of his presence, these blessings should accrue: he should be himself the middle point of blessing, from which all should flow out. For there was a just sense in men, which hindered them from ever looking for, or conceiving of, any blessings apart from a person with whom they were linked, and from whom they were diffused. Even in the *Pollio* of the great Latin poet, however little interpreters are at one concerning who the kindler of such joyful hopes, the expected child, might be, and however unsatisfying the common explanations must be confessed, yet this much is certain, that the poet could not conceive or dream of a mere natural golden age. It must centre in and unfold itself from a living person: it must stand in a real relation to his appearing, being the outcoming and reflection of his righteousness.

But it may be asked, Are we justified in looking at this expectation as the expectation

of something which is to be indeed made ours in Him that is true? All will, I think, allow that the prospect of a restored Paradise, in other words, of a world lightened from its curse, does belong to the very essence of our Christian hope—that there was a truth in the ancient Chiliasm, which all its sensual exaggerations should not induce us to slight or to put aside—in so far, that is, as it was a protest against the dishonour which had been put upon a part of God's creation, or rather upon the completeness of the redemption of that part, if it had been admitted to have been so utterly and irrecoverably spoiled, that now it could only be destroyed, and not renewed. Assuredly the hope of this recovery forms part of the anticipation of prophets. The waste places of the world, those outward signs of sin, which are imprest visibly on nature, shall disappear; “the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad.” What glory the world yet keeps shall be enhanced and infinitely multiplied; “The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound*.” (Isai.

* For the way in which the Jewish commentators understood such passages as these, see Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.*, t. 2. p. 62, 171 and Eisenmenger's *Entdeckt. Judenthum*, v. 2. p. 826.

xxx. 26.) All the discords which have followed hard upon the fall shall be hushed to peace ; “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid.” (Isai. xi. 10.) And apostles take up the strain : they too declare how “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now ;” how “the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” (Rom. viii. 19.) They see in ecstatic vision not merely a new heaven, but a new earth, and One sitting upon his throne who says, “Behold, I make *all* things new.” (Rev. xxi. 5).

And we have, not lying thus on the surface of Scripture, other obscurer yet not less significant indications of the intimate connexion between the restoration of man and the restoration of the outward world—as for instance, in the use of the same word in the New Testament to signify the one and the other. There is a *regeneration* of man, but the same word (*παλιγγενεσία*) is most significantly applied to nature also, and expresses that great and transcendant change which for it also is in store. (Matt. xix. 28.) There is for it also a new birth, for so this word thus applied tells us, no less than for man,—a casting off of its old and wrinkled skin,—a resurrection morn, when it too shall put on its Easter garments ; when, as some foster-nurse, it shall share in the glory of

the royal child whom it has reared, and who at length ascending the throne of his kingdom, is mindful of her in whose lap in time past he has been nurtured*. Man's regeneration is indeed a present one, and nature's in the main a future; yet they are but workings in narrower and wider spheres of the same almighty power, and so may thus justly be called by the same name.

Nor by word alone, but also by pregnant symbol, it was declared that this redemption was a part of that work which the Son of man came to effect. For I cannot doubt that there was a symbolic pointing at what had been lost, and what was to be won back, in the fact of the Temptation of our blessed Lord finding place in the wilderness. The garden and the wilderness are thus set forth to us as the two opposite poles. By sin the first Adam lost the garden, which henceforward disappeared from the earth, so that the very site of it has since been vainly sought; and from that day forth the wilderness was man's appointed home. Christ therefore, the second Adam, taking up the conflict at the point where the first Adam had left it, and inheriting, so to speak, all the consequences of his defeat, did in the wilderness do battle with the foe, and triumphing

* Chrysostom: Καθάπερ γὰρ τιθήνη, παιδίον τρέφουσα βασιλικόν, ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐκείνου γινομένου τῆς πατρικῆς, καὶ αὐτὴ συναπολαύει τῶν ἀγαθῶν, οὕτω καὶ ἡ κτίσις.

in righteousness, won back the garden for man —which though we see not yet, will in due time unfold itself from Him, and as one of the fruits of his victory ; for the centre being won, the circumference will be won also. We recognize a slight hint of the meaning that lay in making the wilderness the scene of this great conflict, in that which one Evangelist alone records, and which might at first sight seem but to have been added to enhance the desolate savageness of his abode: "He was with the wild beasts" (Mark i. 13.) But surely it means that in Him, the ideal man, the Paradise prerogatives were given back ; the fear of Him and the dread of Him were over all the beasts of the field: "He was with them" and they harmed Him not, but owned Him as their rightful Lord.

Nor may we confine to that single act of our Lord's life, the tokens which He gave that He should be this deliverer of nature ; nor may we say that the glory of a redeemed nature is a glory which as yet *altogether* waits to be revealed. Rather is it already and most truly begun. In his miracles we see the germs and beginnings of its liberation. In them nature is no longer stiff but fluent : its laws so stubborn to others, become elastic in his hands : before Him each of its mountains becomes a plain : it listens for and hears and obeys the lightest intimation of his will.

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 that he who professed to deliver his
 must not be bound upon any side with
 same heavy yoke as they were—that the
 idea of a champion of mankind was that
 one in whom should be found again all the
 prerogatives of every man.

And when we thus say that the miracles
 which Christ wrought were these signs and
 tokens of a redemption, let us not pause
 here, nor contemplate them in their isolation;
 and only as once having been, but rather as
 facts pregnant with ulterior consequences, as
 the earlier steps of a series, as firstfruits of a
 gracious power which did not stop with them,
 but has ever since continued to unfold itself
 more and more. What Christ once, and in
 them, wrought in intensive power, he works

evermore in extensive. Once or twice He multiplied the bread, but evermore in Christian lands, famine is become a stranger, a more startling, become a more unusual, thing—the culture of the earth proceeding with surer success, with a larger return. A few times he healed the sick, but in the reverence for man's body which his Gospel teaches, in the sympathy for all forms of suffering which flows out of it, in the sure advance of all worthier science which it implies, in and by aid of all this, these miraculous cures unfold themselves into the whole art of Christian medicine, into all the alleviations and removals of pain and disease, which are so rare in other, and so frequent in Christian lands. Once he quelled the storm; but in the clear dominion of man's spirit over the material universe which Christianity gives, in the calm courage which it inspires, a lordship over the winds and waves, over the blind uproar of nature, is secured, which only can again be lost with the loss of all the spiritual gifts with which he has endued his people. Already Paul was *de facto* admiral in that great tempest upon the Adrian sea.

Thus then, brethren, we see that the world's expectation upon this side also has an answering fact. There is One who does truly give what the hearts of men have desired. Their longing after a redeemed creation was no delusive

dream, however the ways in which they realized that longing, and gave it an outward shape, were premature and vain. Let me repeat an admonition once already made, yet which it may not be unprofitable to repeat. Let us for ourselves take care that we view aright these askings after the true and what they mean—that they be not, by the fraud of men, used against us, to undermine, or at least to embarrass, the faith, which they ought to help to establish. We have spoken already of the way in which they might be so used. The slight upon the miracles of Scripture, and all other God's mighty gifts to the world by his Son, through the adducing of other works seemingly of a like kind, other similar pretensions made by, or on behalf of, others, the mingling and so losing of the divine facts amid a multitude of phenomena apparently similar,—this has been often attempted, but is probably now working itself out into a more consistent theory, and one more conscious of itself, and what it means, and what its advantages are, than ever in times past it has done.

The evading of the stress of Christ's works by the reply, that such have been the accompaniment of every heroic personage, glories and ornaments which the imagination of his fellows has inevitably lent him, the halo with which it has clothed him,—for instance, that it has ever-

more been presumed that the outer world will obey him, no reluctant slave to his material force, but a ready servant to his spiritual will;—this manner of dealing with the marvellous works of Christ is likely to find great favour in our time: nor is it hard to see the reason. It falls in remarkably with the tendencies of our age. It retains, and is consistent with, a certain measure of respect to the records of revelation. For it does not presume those parts of them which affirm supernatural facts a fraud or forgery, nor yet to be the record of deceptions and sleights of hand, but only that the men to whom we owe these accounts lay under the same laws, were subject to the same optical illusions in the spiritual world, as all their fellows, as belong to the very essence of man's nature: it was only in them as in others, that the mighty desire became father to the belief. This theory offers a way of dealing with a great multitude of statements presented as historic, which men are not willing to brand outright as falsehoods, and as little willing to accept as truths. It offers a middle course, respectful to Christianity, and at the same time effectually escaping from its authority: and presenting, as it seems, a calm and philosophical explanation both for its more perplexing phenomena, and also for very much beyond it, it will be strange if in our age, which rejoices

so much in large and inclusive points of view, it does not find a ready and a wide acceptance.

But in truth, brethren, this universal imagination, these consenting expectations upon all sides, in so many thousands and thousands of hearts, these, if we believe in a divine origin and destination of man, if we believe that this man or that may be deceived, but that all men cannot—since whatever there may be of false at the surface, the foundations of his being are laid in the truth, being laid in God—if we believe that this or that generation may be dreaming fantastic and merely feverish dreams, which have no counterparts whatever in the actual world of realities, but not all generations—if there is that in us which, prior to all argument, binds us to believe that no such cruel falsehood would be played off upon man as a great longing laid deep in his heart, without a corresponding object—then to us believing so, these wide-spread, or say rather these universal expectations, will themselves give testimony to a truth which answers to them. We shall not indeed look for a truth answering to them in all their accidents, for these will be local, temporary, varying: and of necessity the truth, when it comes to pass, must more or less depart and differ from that form in which it clothed itself to them who waited for it. For that form perforce was more or less injuriously affected by that sinful

element, which in the mind of each would mingle with, and debase and degrade it. But there will be a testimony in these consenting expectations for that which lies at the root of, and after the merely accidental is stripped off, remains common to, and so constitutes the essence of, them all.

And when we are deeply convinced of this, then in all those in whom the world has greatly hoped—workers, as it has been thought, of wondrous works—bringers back of a golden age—utterers, as has been fondly deemed, of the forgotten spell of power—graspers anew of the sceptre over nature which had fallen from the hand of every one beside—readers backward of the primal curse—in the mighty acts attributed to each one of these, we shall trace proofs of the exceeding fitness which there was, that He who indeed came in the fulness of the time, should come furnished with signs and wonders and mighty works, so that even the winds and the sea obeyed Him ; we shall read in all, prophetic intimations, which indeed understood not themselves, of Him who in the days of his flesh, by firstfruits of power, declared Himself the promised Seed of the woman who should comfort us for the earth which God had cursed, and at length bring about its perfect redemption from that curse, making it, thus redeemed, a fit dwelling-place for his redeemed people.

LECTURE VI.

THE REDEEMER FROM SIN.

ROMANS VII. 21, 23.

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

IN my latest discourse I spoke of the world's expectation of one who should deliver all outward nature from its curse, of one in whom the Adamic prerogatives should re-appear. To-day I shall be led to speak of a yet nearer deliverance, of one which it imported to man yet more that he should win, or that another should win for him—an harmony which he demanded with a yet more earnest longing than this harmony of nature with itself, or of nature with him—an inner harmony, a deliverance from his own evil, from that in himself which was threatening his true being with destruction,

from the lusts which embraced his soul, but while they embraced, strangled and destroyed. For sin has never reigned so undisputed a lord in his heart, but that there were voices there protesting against its lordship. His will was enslaved; but he knew that it was enslaved, that freedom was its birthright; and bondage, it might be its miserable necessity now, but not its true condition from the first.

It was the sense of this, of this inner contradiction in his life, which made one to exclaim that he felt as if two souls were lodged within him*; and another to set forth the soul of man as a chariot, which two horses, one white and one black, were drawing—so did the wondrous fact present itself to him, of the flesh lusting against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, so was he aware that if there is that in every man which is drawing him up to God and to the finding of his true freedom in God, there is also that which is drawing him downward, till he utterly lose himself and his own true life in the mire of sensual and worldly lusts. It was the sense of this, which made the image of the two ways, a downward and an upward—one easy and strewn with flowers, but a way of death; one hard and sharp set with thorns, but a way of life, as

* Xenophon, *Cyropæd.* l. 6, c. 1, § 41.

familiar to heathen moralists* as to us who hear of the broad and the narrow way, the wide and the strait gate, from the lips of the Lord himself.

And thus the problem which each nobler system proposed to itself was the delivering from this evil, the bringing of an harmony into the inner life—its end to make man a king, so that he should have dominion over himself, and over all of his nature which was not truly himself—that which was appointed to rule in him, ruling, and that which was appointed to serve, serving—the charioteer charioting, and not dragged in the dust at the heels of the horses. The promise which it held out of giving this, was that which each system had of attractive—I mean to the choicer spirits of the world. They *only* felt drawn to it as it undertook to give them this liberty, and harmoniously to re-adjust the disturbed relations of their inward life.

I know that when we undertake to speak of these things, and would shew in how wonderful a degree the ancient world was engaged with the same moral and spiritual problems as are engaging ourselves, there is a caution which

* Hesiod, *Op.* 289—292; Xenophon, *Memorab.* l. 2, c. 1, § 21, seq.; Cebes, *Tab.* c. 12. Lactantius (*Inst. Div.* l. 6. c. 3) notes how heathen poet and philosopher had already used this image.

we must take to ourselves, if we would not trace entirely delusive resemblances, and be led away by merely accidental likenesses in expression, which yet point to no real likeness at the root; this caution, I mean—that since there are points of apparent contact in almost all systems, it follows that before we can find any significance in these, or conclude one because of them to stand in any close affinity to another, we must strictly ask ourselves, how deep these resemblances go, whether they lie merely on the surface, or reach down to the central heart of the matter, to that which determines the nature of each; whether we have been caught by words and phrases which have a similar sound, but which, looked into more accurately, will be found to conceal under language which sounds nearly the same, statements which are really and essentially most diverse. This mistake no doubt has often been made; phrases have been snatched at and claimed as ours, as anticipating and bearing witness to Christian truths, without waiting to inquire what place they really hold in the complex of the system from which they are taken. Thus a Latin Father* has spoken of Seneca as “one of us” on the score of certain shewy maxims which sound at first hearing, and till they are adjusted into their place, like

* Jerome (*Adv. Jovin.* l. 1, in fine): *Noster Seneca.*

great Christian truths; and this, though perhaps there could not have been two schemes more opposite at the heart to one another than that Stoic, which in its pride would teach us to seek all in ourselves, and the Christian, which bids us with an humbler yet truer wisdom to seek all out of ourselves and in another.

But at the same time, and owning our liability to be thus deceived, we must yet keep far from that other course, which shunning the faults and exaggerations of this, refuses to see stirring at all in the heathen world the same riddles of life and of death which are perplexing ourselves. This extreme is theirs, who will give any explanation rather than a moral one, and the more trivial the better, to the legend and the tale of antiquity, who obstinately refuse to hear in the most earnest voices which reach them from the past, cries after the same deliverance for which we yearn. The tendency to this is in truth at its root antichristian; for it grows, whether it owns it or not, out of a conviction that all with which Christianity deals is in fact accidental, and does not belong to the essential stuff of humanity—that this revelation of which we boast has no claim to be considered as an answer to the deepest and most universal needs of men—that echoes of it therefore are nowhere to be listened for,

or being caught, are in no wise to be accounted more than accidental reverberations of the air.

Keeping then that caution in view, but as a caution only, and resisting, as we are bound to do, the endeavour to rob the whole heathen world, its philosophy and mythology alike, of all moral significance for us, on the score that significance has sometimes been found where truly there was none, we may boldly say that the highest philosophy of the old world did concern itself with a redemption—not of course with a Redeemer, for of such it knew not: but it did avowedly set before itself as its aim and purpose the helping of souls to a birth out of a world of shews and appearances into the world of realities, out of a world of falsehood into one of truth, turning them from darkness to light, from the contemplation of shadows to the contemplation of substance*. That favourite saying of Socrates that he exercised still the craft of his mother, that his task and work, his mission in the world, was such an helping of souls to the birth, by the helping to a birth the conceptions which were struggling there†, this rested on no other

* The great passage in the *Republic* of Plato, l. 7. c. 1, 2. will at once suggest itself to many.

† Plato's *Theætetus*, c. 6. Stallbaum's edit., p. 63.

thought,—was in its kind and however remotely a prelude to far mightier truth, the earthly anticipation of an heavenly word, of *his* word who said, “Ye must be born again.” It pointed, although at an infinite distance, to the possibility of a birth into a kingdom, not merely of reality as opposed to semblance, but of holiness as opposed to sin.

What again is “Know thyself,” that great saying of the heathen philosophy, in which, when it turned from being merely physical and a speculation about natural appearances, the sun the moon and the stars, to the making of man and man’s being the region in which it moved, the riddles of humanity, the riddles which it sought to solve—what was that “Know thyself,” that great word in which it embodied and expressed so well its own character and aim, and all that it proposed to effect, but a preparation afar off for an higher word, the “Repent ye,” of the Gospel? Since let that precept only be faithfully carried out, and in what else could it issue but repentance? or at least in what else but in an earnest longing after this great change of heart and life? For out of this self-knowledge what else can grow but self-loathing? so that men being once come, as they presently must, to a consciousness of their error and their departure from goodness and truth, should hate them-

selves, and flee from themselves to whatever higher guide was offered them; to the end that they might become different men, and not remain the same which before they were. What could man behold himself, if only he beheld himself aright, but, to use the wonderful comparison of Plato*, as that sea-god, in whom the pristine form was now scarcely to be recognized, so were some limbs of his body broken off, and some marred and battered by the violence of the waves, while to the rest shells and stones and sea-weed had clung and overgrown them, till he bore a resemblance rather to some monster than to that which by nature he was? What was man but such a wreck of his nobler self, what but such a monster could he shew in his own eyes, if only he could be prevailed to fix those eyes steadfastly upon himself?

* *De Rep.* 10, c. 11 : ὥσπερ οἱ τὸν θαλάττιον Γλαῦκον ὀρώντες, οὐκ ἂν ἔτι ῥαδίως αὐτοῦ ἴδοιεν τὴν ἀρχαίαν φύσιν, ὑπὸ τοῦ τὰ τε παλαιὰ τοῦ σώματος μέρη τὰ μὲν ἐκκεκλᾶσθαι, τὰ δὲ συντετριφθαι καὶ πάντως λελωβῆσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, ἄλλα δὲ προσπεφυκέναι ὄστρεα τε καὶ φύκια καὶ πέτρας, ὥστε παντὶ μᾶλλον θηρίῳ εἰκέναι ἢ οἷος ἦν φύσει. οὕτω καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμεῖς θεώμεθα διακειμένην ὑπὸ μυρίων κακῶν. This Glaucus discovered the fountain of immortality, of which he drank; but not being able to shew it to others, was by them hurled into the deep of the sea. From time to time, the fishermen catch sight of him, or hear him bewailing his immortality. The way in which this mythus is used by Plato, is a testimony for the profound meaning which he found in it.

And when men, thus learning their fall, and how great it was, learned also to long for their restoration, very interesting and instructive is it to observe how Christ realized for yearning souls not only the very thing which they asked for, but that in the very forms under which they had asked it; most instructive to observe how the very language of Scripture, in which it sets forth the gifts which a Saviour brings, was a language which more or less had been used already to set forth the blessings which men wanted, or which from others they had most imperfectly obtained. The Gospel falls in not only with the wants of souls, but with the expression of those wants.

Thus there had continually spoken out in men, a sense of that which they needed to be done for them, as an *healing*, as a binding up of hurts, a stanching of wounds. The art of the physician did but image forth an higher cure and care, which should concern itself not with the bodies, but with the souls, of men. They were but the branches of one and the same discipline, so much so, that the same god who was conceived master in one, the soother of passions, was master also in the other, the healer of diseases. It was conceived of sins as of stripes and wounds, leaving their livid marks, their enduring scars, on the miserable souls

which had committed them, and which carried these evidences of their guilt, visibly impressed on them for ever, into that dark world, and before those awful judgement-seats, whither after death they were bound*.

How deep the corresponding image of Christ's work as a work of healing, reaches in Scripture, I need not remind you. His ministry of grace had been set forth in language borrowed from this art, by prophets who went before; He should be anointed to heal the broken-hearted, to bind up the bruised; and when he began that ministry, He claimed these prophecies for Himself, laying his finger on the most signal among them, and saying, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Luke iv. 21.) And then too we shall all remember how in another place He spake of sinners as being sick, and Himself as being their physician (Matt. ix. 12.); and by the good Samaritan it has been often thought more than likely, that He shadowed forth Himself, the despised of his own people, and yet the true binder up of the bleeding hurts of humanity. But what need of more proof, when we use the very word *health*† as equivalent for salvation:

* Plato, *Georgias*, Stallbaum's edit. p. 314.

† Thus Plato (*De Rep.* l. 4, c. 18, Stallbaum's edit. p. 324): ἀρετὴ μὲν ἄρα ὡς εἰκεν, ὑγίειά τέ τις ἂν εἴη καὶ κάλλος καὶ εὐεξία ψυχῆς, κακία δὲ νόσος τε καὶ αἰσχος καὶ ἀσθένεια.

That fearful saying of the heathen sage remains most true, that every sin *is* a wound, that it leaves behind it its scar, invisible now,—for it is a scar not on the body, but the soul,—which will yet be only too plainly visible in the day of the revelation of all things. Yet He so heals them whom He takes in hand, He makes so perfect a cure, that not even the scars of their hurts shall remain; “by whose stripes ye are healed.” He only waited till there was an earnest desire awakened in men that they might find themselves in an hospital of souls—till these desires came to an head,—till it was felt that all which was offered elsewhere reached not to an effectual binding up of hurts, was but an healing of them slightly, presently to break out anew, or a covering of them over with purple and with gold, leaving them the while to fester unhindered beneath. He only waited till it was owned that a divine Physician, and none other, could take the great sufferer in hand, and then straightway He stood by the sufferer’s side, and proffered him all that he had asked for, help and healing, and these in the very forms under which he had asked them*.

* Augustine (*Serm.* 87, c. 10): *Jacet toto orbe terrarum ab oriente usque in occidentem grandis ægrotus. Ad sanandum grandem ægrotum descendit omnipotens medicus. Humiliavit se usque ad mortalem carnem, tamquam usque ad lectum ægrotantis.*

Nor was it otherwise with the idea of *freedom*—an idea which lies so close to the very heart and centre of the Gospel, that its benefits and blessings are perhaps oftener set forth by a word borrowed from this circle of images than by any other, oftener described as a *redemption* or a purchase out of slavery, and Christ as a Redeemer or purchaser, and thus a setter free, than by any other language. It is true that we have come to use these words with so little earnestness, have taken them so much in vain, we have so lightly passed them backward and forward from hand to hand, that the sharpness and distinctness of their first outline has been for us almost lost and worn away, so that they scarcely, or only now and then, with any vividness bring to our minds the truths which they affirm—the awful truth of that slavery *out* of which we were delivered, the glorious truth of that liberty *into* which we have been brought. But still these words, though we may forget it, do evermore proclaim this; and they are words by which oftener perhaps than by any other, the Holy Spirit in the Scripture declares the benefits whereof Christ has made us partakers.

And being this Redeemer or setter free, He was in this regard also “the Desire of all nations.” For He, when He said “Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin,” (John viii. 34,) when his apostle characterized himself in his natu-

ral state as a slave, "sold under sin," (Rom. vii. 14); when another of his apostles spoke of evil men as "servants of corruption," (2 Pet. ii. 19,) He and they, using this language, were but affirming the same which had been found out and felt by every sinner that ever lived, the confession of which had been wrung out too from the lips of thousands; and when He offered freedom, a victory over all which was bringing into bondage, an overcoming of the world, as the issue of obedience unto Him, He was but offering what, in one shape or another, each guide and teacher of his fellows had offered before,—with indeed the mighty difference, that He could make good his offer, and they not. I need not remind you with what frequency we meet, sometimes almost to satiety, declarations of this kind,—of wisdom being the only freedom—the wise man, the only free-man, the only king,—of lusts as evil mistresses which enslave the soul and bring it into bondage; how the promise of liberty is on the lips of each who would gather disciples round him. All this is strewn too thickly over the pages of heathen literature to need any proof in particular. And meeting these statements thus frequently and thus earnestly expressed as we often do meet them there, we must see how they bear testimony that men continually envisaged the highest benefits which their souls

could attain, under the aspect of freedom, of redemption—that the attaining of this freedom was the object of their lives and hopes, however little they could make it their own, however they were to discover, by their fruitless struggles and toils, that only when the Son made them free, they could be free indeed.

Again, a pointing at the crowning gift which was at length given unto the world in Him, may be traced in the idea of *music* which was so frequently and so fondly used as the best outward expression of inner life-harmony,—which was felt to have so singular and profound a fitness, that a term borrowed from this art, was, we may say, formally adopted as the aptest for setting forth that whole discipline which occupied itself with the right composure of the higher powers, with the bringing into one consent of the threefold nature of man;—he in whom this language comes most prominently forward, finding no worthier terms in which to describe that wisdom with which he was enamoured, than as the fairest and mightiest of the harmonies*; while sin, on the contrary, presented itself to him and to many more, as a deep inner disharmony, as a discord which had forced itself into the innermost centre of man's life, and only through the expulsion of which he could again

* Plato (*Dr Legg.* l. 3): καλλίστην καὶ μεγίστην τῶν συμφωνιῶν.

make it what it ought to be, rhythmic, numerous, and harmonious. All these thoughts, which, first expressed by one or two, yet found echoes in the bosoms of all, how did they in their weakness to realize themselves, in the fact that discords ever made themselves too plainly felt in the lives, not of the taught only, but of the teachers as well—how did they ask for One, the mighty master of all spiritual melodies; whose own life, free from one jarring note, should make perfect music in the ears of God; and not this only, but who should attune once more that marvellous instrument which had lain silent so long, or from which discords only had proceeded, even the soul of man, and draw from it again sounds which should be sweet even in the ears accustomed to the symphonies of heaven.

Surely all their language, though they knew it not, pointed to such a mighty master of heavenly harmonies as this. For if it be true of Him, that as He emptied the golden seats of Olympus, and swept their long line of heroes and demi-gods and gods into the darkness and corruption of the tomb, He gathered from each idol as it fell its pretended majesty and dominion and power, claiming them all rightfully for his own, and weaving all the scattered rays of light into one crown of glory for his own head; then of none of these could this be more truly said than of him whom men feigned to

be the god of harmony, to have potency thereby over the spirits of men, with power to exalt, to purify, and to soothe, whose music acted as a charm to tranquillize the passions and attune the spirit to a peace with itself, and with all which was around it*. For Christian peace, the peace which Christ gives, the peace which He sheds abroad in the heart, is it ought else than such a glorified harmony—the expelling from man's life of all that was bringing disturbance into it, all that was hindering him from chiming in with the music of heaven, all that would have made him a jarring and a dissonant note, left out from the great dance and minstrelsy of the spheres, in which mingle the consenting songs of redeemed men and elect angels?

Thus did the Son of God at his coming in the flesh, take up the unfulfilled promises of all human systems. For they *were* unfulfilled; those systems had wrought no deliverance worthy of the name on the earth. How scanty was the number of those whom they would even undertake to save,—a few highly favoured or greatly gifted spirits of the world—not the poor, the ignorant, the weak; in this how different from that Gospel which is preached to the poor, and whose tidings are good because they are these, that the Lord

* Müller's *Dorians*, b. 2, c. 8, § 11.

hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall put their trust therein! But theirs was essentially an aristocratic salvation, which should help a few, setting them apart from their fellows, on pinnacles from whence they were in danger of looking down far more with gratulation at their own deliverance, than with inward bleeding compassion for the multitudes which were vainly seeking for a path below. And indeed often it was not a salvation at all, even in the very lowest sense of that word: how often was it Satan casting out Satan—one form of evil expelling another, as one nail drives out its fellow—pride and vain-glory setting men above their fleshly sins, but at the same time making them slaves of spiritual wickednesses—of the seven worse spirits which take possession of the house, empty and swept and garnished, from which the one spirit of sensual lust has gone out, but which has not been occupied by any nobler guest.

And if, brethren, even *our* struggles after an inward conformity to an higher rule, are what they are—if with all the helps at our command, we yet win no step without an effort, if oftentimes our premature hymns of victory over this sin or that are changed into confessions of a shameful defeat, and we who went forth with garlands too early wreathed about our brows, have to come home and put

ashes upon our heads, how must it have been with them? how continually must it have been a seeing of the better only with a greater guilt to choose the worse! Surely the confession of the Jewish Pharisee that was zealous for the law and for righteousness must have been the confession of unnumbered souls in all the world, wrung out from a deep heart-agony, from the sense of defeats repeating themselves with a sad uniformity, of ever deeper entanglement in the defilements of the flesh and of the world—"That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I....I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Such voices, no doubt, did make themselves heard. For indeed contemplating the times which went before the Incarnation, we shall nor err if we affirm that there had been two cries which had long been going up into the ears of the Lord of Hosts—*two* cries, although one was far more distinct and articulate than the other. There was the voice of appointed prophets and seers, watchers on the mountains of Israel, waiting for a Sun of Righteousness,

who, as they surely knew, should in his time scatter the world's gloom, and shed healing from his wings. There was theirs who, knowing this, yet out of a mighty sense of the present evil around them and within them, would fain have hastened the time,—psalmist and prophet who exclaimed, “Oh that the salvation were given unto Israel out of Zion!” “Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down!” But there was another, a more confused cry, of multitudinous tones: it oftentimes knew not what its own accents meant; it was often rather a groan within the bosom of humanity, which asked not and thought not of a listener, than a voice sent up unto heaven. It was a cry which only infinite wisdom and infinite love would have interpreted into that cry for heavenly help, which indeed at the heart it was; a cry needing infinite love to pardon all in it which made it rather a cry against God, than to Him. But that love it found. He who said long before, “I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people,” saw also the affliction of a world hopelessly out of the way, translated its confused voices into an appeal to Him, and sent forth his Son to be the Saviour of that world.

And then, what not alone the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, but what all wisdom had been equally impotent to

effect, for it underlay the same weakness, He did; what they could not give, He gave. For here we come back again to a point which I have pressed already, but which yet is so important, that I shall make no apology for pressing it once more, which is this,—that the prerogative of our Christian faith, the secret of its strength is, that all which it has, and all which it offers, is laid up in a person. This is what has made *it* strong, when so much else has proved weak, that it has a Christ as its middle point—that it is not a circumference without a centre,—that it has not merely a deliverance, but a Deliverer,—not a redemption only, but a Redeemer as well. This is what makes it fit for wayfaring men; this is what makes *it* sun-light, and all else compared with it but as moon-light, fair it may be, but cold and chill; while here the light and the life are one; the Light is also the Life of men. Oh how great the difference between submitting ourselves to a complex of rules, and casting ourselves upon a beating heart; between accepting a system, and cleaving to a person. And how tenfold blessed the advantages of the last, if that person is such a One that there shall be nothing servile in the entire resignation of ourselves to be taught of Him, for He is the absolute Truth—nothing unmanly in yielding of our whole being to be wholly moulded by

Him, for that He is not merely the highest which humanity has reached, but the highest which it can reach—its intended and ideal perfection, at once its perfect image and superior Lord.

They felt this, that help must lie in a person, that only round a person souls would cluster, who, when they would fain make a final stand for the old beliefs of the world, and prove if it were not yet possible to dispute the world with the youthful Christian Church;—they felt this, who set about marshalling, not merely rival doctrines to the Christian, but rival benefactors to Christ. If He went about Judæa doing good, they also would point to sages of theirs, who went on like errands to the furthest East. This is no doubt the meaning of that half fabulous life of Apollonius; and so did they rightly feel the need of not coming short in this respect, of that which they would oppose, however poor and flitting the phantoms which they conjured up to their help.

For, brethren, had we a system only, it would leave us just as weak as other systems have left their votaries. We should have to confess that we found in ours, as they in theirs, no adequate strength—that not merely now and then, and at ever rarer intervals, we were worsted in our conflict with the sin of our own hearts, but evermore. Our blessedness, and let us not miss

that blessedness, is, that our treasures are treasured in a person, and are therefore inexhaustible—in one who *requires* nothing but what first He *gives*—who is not for one generation a present teacher and a living Lord, and then for all succeeding a past and a dead one, but who is present and living for all—as truly for us at this day, as for them who went up and down with Him in the days of his flesh. Our strength and our blessedness is, that what we have to know is “the truth as it is in Jesus;” that what we have to learn is to “learn Christ;” that what we have to put on, is to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” and the righteousness which is by Him.

LECTURE VII.

THE FOUNDER OF A KINGDOM.

HEBREWS XI. 10.

A city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

WE have seen the manner in which Christ, "the Desire of all nations," met and satisfied the yearnings of men for an inward peacemaker, for one who, by the mighty magic of his word and Spirit, should change the tumult of man's soul into a great calm; who should heal the hurts which each man was conscious that he had inflicted upon himself; who should set each man free from the bondage to those lords many, his own lusts and inordinate affections, under whose cruel tyranny he had come. But besides these longings for harmony and health and freedom in the region of his own inner life, there are other longings and other desires which crave satisfaction. For each, besides being simply a man, is also a man among men; besides the sinful element which so perplexes

his own inner life, in the relation of one part of it to the other, the higher to the lower, which so threatens his true life with destruction, not from foreign, but from intestine enemies—the same sinful element acting outwardly in himself, and in every other man, disturbs and perplexes his relation to them, and theirs to him. That which remains in himself, unsubdued, of evil, that which exists of the same in every other, brings about collision between two selfishnesses. “From whence”—in the wonderfully simple, yet profound language of Scripture, language applicable to the pettiest village brawl, and to the mightiest conflict that has ranged one half of the world against the other—“from whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of the lusts that war in your members.” (James iv. 1.)

At once the question has presented itself to every thoughtful man—it eminently did so to the great spirits of antiquity,—Is the warfare of these encountering selfishnesses the necessary, the only condition of society? Is it our wisdom to acquiesce in it, satisfied if this evil will allow itself to be kept within certain bounds—to be so far restrained, that a society, a living together of men for social conveniences which they could not attain in their isolated state, becomes possible? And is society such a fellowship of men that have holden back, by

mutual consent, so much of their selfishness and evil, as would render habitation within the same walls, or in the same neighbourhood impossible, and would thus defeat them of the gains which they desired by this combination to attain?

There have never been wanting, there were not wanting of old, those who dared to avow this wolfish theory of society for their own—that is, as a theory: for no community of men has ever subsisted upon it; no sooner have they begun to put it in practice, than, biting and devouring, they have presently been utterly consumed one of another. And they who even avowed it as a theory were few—a profligate sophist of the old or the new world, a Thrasymachus or a Mandeville; the exceptions and not the rule. For rather it was truly seen that the fellowship of man with man, so far from being an artificial product of his wants, something added on to his true humanity that lay circular and complete in himself already, something therefore which he might have forgone without any necessary imperfection, is that rather which constitutes the very humanity itself—animals *herding*, men only *living* together. It was seen that this fellowship is the sphere in which alone his true life, that which belongs to him as man, can unfold itself—in which alone he can

reach, it is little to say, the perfection of his being, but without which he cannot be conceived otherwise than as a monster, such a monster as the world never saw. It was truly perceived of that other condition of absolute isolation, that, so far from being the state of nature, it is rather a state so unnatural that no man has ever perfectly reached it—the most absolute savage not having become an isolated unit, not having been able to strip himself bare of all moral relations—being at most able to act as though he had not, but never able to cease from having, these. And they understood therefore that not this tamed selfishness was the idea in which the state consisted, and on which it reposed, but that there was another, to which every state and fellowship of men, as it deserved the name, as it would be anything better than a pirate's deck or a robber's den, must be a nearer or more remote approximation: a condition in which men were holden together by invisible ties,—by sanctions which not the flesh, but the spirit, owned to be binding,—by common rites —by a god Terminus keeping the boundaries of fields,—by a dread of vengeance, not as the mere human recoil of outrage on the wrong doer, but as being itself divine—a condition in which men have felt that they were one people, not so much in their common interests

and common aims, or even in their common history, as in the one tutelar Deity that overlooked their city, and to whom they had confided its keeping.

If it was so—if there was this sense existing in the hearts, shewing itself in the acts, of men, that the relations between man and man rest on something out of sight, are spiritual relations, not those of force, or fraud, or convenience—that men do not huddle together as cattle, to keep themselves warm, nor band together as wild beasts, that they may hunt in company; that law is not a result of so much self-will which each man might have kept, but for certain advantageous considerations throws into a common stock, but that rather there is a law of laws, anterior to, and constituting the ground of, each positive enactment—if men had any sense of this divine order, which they did not themselves constitute, but into which they entered; which to accept was good, which to deny and fight against was evil,—if they did thus believe in a kingdom of righteousness and truth, and that we were made for that, (in the words of the father of Roman philosophy, *Nos ad justitiam esse natos*,)—if there was any true feeling that those lusts and desires, so far from being the ground of the state, the cement which held it together, were rather the element of decay which was ever threatening its dissolution,

and were to be denied as the violations of the humanity, not recognized as its essentials ; then we have implicitly here the acknowledgement of, and the yearning after, the kingdom of God *. They who believed this, believed in “ the city which hath foundations,” in that only one which can have everlasting foundations, for it is the only one whose foundations are laid in perfect righteousness and perfect truth—the city “ whose builder and maker is God,” which Abraham looked for, and because he looked for, would take no portion in the cities of confusion round him, but dwelling in tents witnessed against them, and declared plainly that he sought a country—the city of which *we* already are made free, and which it was given to the latest seer of the New Covenant, ere the book was sealed, to behold in the spirit coming down from heaven in its final glory. (Rev. xxi. 2.)

And can we say that there were not such thoughts and expectations stirring in the hearts of men—that the idea of a perfect state, as well as of a perfect man, had not risen up before the eyes of them, the men of desire, the souls to which any spirit of higher divination was

* Thus Cicero, *De Leg.* l. 1, c. 7. *Universus hic mundus una civitas communis Deorum atque hominum existimanda.* Cf. *De Fin.* l. 5, c. 23, and the glorious passage in Juvenal (*Sat.* 15, 131—158,) one of the noblest in antiquity, on the fellowship of men with one another, as resting on their divine original.

imparted? Were not the latest speculations of the wisest sage, those to which he fitly came after he had accomplished each other task, concerning this very thing? Nor needs it to press that derivation of *religion* which would make it the band and bond, which binding men to God, binds them also to one another; for it is a derivation which cannot be justified*; and the fact, to which such an etymology would give only an additional proof, is unquestionable without it—I mean, that the invisible ties were those in which every state was acknowledged to consist, so that with their weakening it must grow weak, with their perishing it must perish; while to strengthen and to multiply these, was justly regarded as the noblest mission of its worthiest sons. What if here too heathendom had but the negative preparation, and Judaism the positive? what if the Jew could point to a

* Nitzsch (*Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* v. 1, p. 532) elaborately and abundantly proves that according to the genius of the Latin language, the only possible derivation of *religio* is Cicero's (*De Nat. Deor.* l. 2, c. 28), and Augustine's (*De Civ. Dei*, l. 2, c. 28), à relegendo, the conscientious anxiety and accuracy in the performance of the divine offices. The passage which best explains how the word obtains a wider meaning is this from Arnobius (*Adv. Gen.* l. 4, c. 30): Non enim qui sollicitè *relegit* et immaculatas hostias cædit... numina consentiendus est colere, aut officia solus religionis implere. That of Lactantius (*Instit.* l. 4, c. 28), à religando, to which allusion above is made, Nitzsch rejects, as an impossible etymology.

state which did realize, though through his own sin most inadequately, this kingdom in its unripe and early beginnings, and was upheld by the sure word of prophecy, that one day the King of this kingdom should be revealed, and should reign in righteousness; while for the heathen they were for the most part dreams to which he could impart no reality, realities which tarried infinitely further behind the idea which they professed to embody—this was only according to the distribution, in God's manifold wisdom, of their several parts to Jew and Gentile, in the preparation for Christ's coming; to the one being already given the stamina and rudiments of that which afterwards should unfold itself more fully, to the other being given little more than the expectation and the want—yet both so conspiring to prepare the way for his appearing.

This want and this expectation Christ came to satisfy; for He came, not merely to awaken a religious sentiment in the minds and hearts of his disciples, or to declare to them certain doctrines of which before they were ignorant; but to found a kingdom, as He Himself declared from the first; as St. John, the herald of his coming, had declared before Him; "The kingdom of God is at hand;" "The kingdom of God is among you." For this term, "kingdom of God," we must not impoverish as

though it were merely a convenient abstraction to express the sum total of the religious sentiments, opinions, feelings, actions of his disciples. But this kingdom, as it is *a kingdom*, points to a visible fellowship, and the embodiment therein of a number of persons, constituting an organic whole, owning a single head. As it is a “kingdom *of God*,” it declares God to be its author and its founder; it declares itself to be lifted above the caprice of men, neither having been made, nor yet being to be marred, by them; which they indeed may deny, but which cannot deny itself, nor by their denial be annulled.

The practical Roman saw as much as the natural man could see of this in a moment—that the question at issue between Christ and the world, was not a question of one notion and another, but of one kingdom and another; and seeing, he came at once to the point, “Art Thou a king then?” And that empire which tolerated all other religions, would have tolerated the Christian, instead of engaging in a death-struggle with it, to strangle or be strangled by it, but that it instinctively felt that this, however its first seat and home might seem to be in the hearts of men, yet could not remain there, but would demand an outward expression for itself—must go forth into the world, and conquer a dominion of its own—a dominion

which would leave no room in the world for another fabric of force and fraud; for it was *his* dominion who, sitting on his throne, should scatter away all evil with his eyes; who had said in a thousand ways, "All the horns of the ungodly will I break, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted."

It is quite true that this kingdom, in the men who at any time compose it, may misunderstand and mistake itself, even as it has often done. There are times when it caricatures itself into a popedom, when knowing rightly that it ought to have a real and outward existence, yet it will not believe that it has this, or is a kingdom at all, unless it can outdo the kingdoms of the world on their own ground, and in their own fashion; unless it can be a kingdom like unto them, and greater than they in their kind of power and magnificence and glory. It is quite true that times arrive when it cannot believe in its own oneness, unless it can see that oneness represented to it in a visible Head. Yet this only proves that times may arrive, when through the sin of its members, its consciousness of itself as God's Church grows weak, when it has only too much lost hold of the great truths on which it was founded, and which it was intended to proclaim; and having done so, does, by an inevitable necessity, act over again the unfaithful

request of the children of Israel, when they desired a king to go forth with *their* armies, as one went forth with the armies of the nations, and would not believe, unless they could thus see him there, that "the shout of a King was among them." (1 Sam. viii.) And the reaction from this error must not make us to count that this kingdom can only be spiritual when it ceases to be real, when retiring into the hearts of men, and dwelling there apart, it claims no more the world for its possession, and each region and province of man's actual life for its own.

But this was not all. This kingdom as it was a consummation of all that men had ever hoped in the way of a kingdom of righteousness, as it was a protest and witness against the evil into which each kingdom of the world, each fairest polity of man's founding, was ever presently degenerating, was not all. Christ came to give more than this; to give not merely a kingdom of truth for some men, but for every man; to found a fellowship which should be for men as men, which should leave out none, which should call no man common or unclean. This indeed was new not merely in fact but even in theory; for it had hardly risen over the horizon of their minds who stood in wisdom and in goodness upon the mountain-summits of the world. The Greek ever left out the barbarian, the freeman the

slave, the philosopher the simple. The highest culture of some was ever built upon the sacrifice of others; they were pitilessly used up in the process. So far from men themselves producing the thought of an universal spiritual fellowship, even after it was given, they were long in making it their own. Thus Celsus mocks at the madness of the Gospel, for so to him it shewed,—adduces as enough to convince its author of a shallow impracticable enthusiasm, that he should have proposed such a dream as this, that Greeks, and Barbarians, and Libyans, and all men to the ends of the earth, should be united in the reception of one and the same doctrine.

Nor can we greatly wonder: the sense of diversity was so strong, that which was differing men was so mighty, the intellectual superiority of the Greek over the Barbarian was so immense, that we cannot be so much surprised to find one thus mocking at the scheme for bringing all men into one, as the shallow dream of an enthusiast's brain. Such it must have seemed to him, who had not insight enough to perceive that the real ground of separation between men lay, not in natural distinctions of race, of customs, of language, but in different objects of worship, in the gods many of polytheism. These were what kept men apart, and rendered their union and

communion impossible. They were not at one in the highest matter of their lives: how should they be in the lower? And if this *was* the ground of division, then the walls of partition might yet be thrown down, would indeed fall away of their own selves, when once there was revealed to faith one God and Father *of* all,—one Christ a common object of love and adoration *for* all, in whom the affections of all might centre,—one Spirit, effectually working *in* all. Then indeed the Babel mischief, the confusion of spirits, whereof the confusion of tongues was only the outward sign, would cease; even as for one prophetic moment on the day of Pentecost, in the gift of tongues, it *had* ceased*, in sign that the Church which that day was founded was for all nations and tongues and tribes. The distinctions between men were indeed infinite, reaching far down into the deeps of their being, yet not to that being's centre; and in the regeneration, in that mighty act of God's, which does not obliterate distinctions, but reconciles them in an higher unity, they might all, so far as they were elements of separation,

* Grotius : Poena linguarum dispersit homines (Gen. xi.) donum linguarum dispersos in unum populum recollegit. In the Persian religion there was the expectation of a day coming when, with the abolition of all evil, ἓνα βίον καὶ μίαν πολιτείαν ἀνθρώπων μακαρίων καὶ ὁμογλώσσων ἀπάντων γενέσθαι. (Plutarch, *De Is. et Osir.* c. 47.)

be annulled. When to all alike it was permitted to say, "We are Christ's, and Christ is God's," then the secret of a fellowship was given, which should include all nations, in which there should be neither wise nor simple, Greek nor Barbarian, bond nor free, but Christ should be all in all.

Of all this the world had, beforehand, scarcely the faintest intimations—the poorest parodies. Yet such parodies perchance there were; and we may be allowed to trace dim indistinct yearnings even for this, for the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, for the making of twain one new man. Thus there were already in the centuries anterior to our Lord meeting-places for the Greek and Jew. Remarkable in this respect was the existence of such a city as Alexandria, where the Jew and Greek met, and sought to exchange to mutual profit the most precious commodities each of his own intellectual and spiritual land, the Jew making himself acquainted with Greek culture, the Old Testament Scriptures becoming accessible to Greek readers. Yet still these meetings were intellectual only: no true blending did or could have followed from them. It is the fire of charity which must melt, ere there can be any real moulding into one. In vain had the whole East and West jostled violently together

they had hardly mingled any more for this. A certain surface civilization had ensued, which was common to both ; but hearts waited for more prevailing bands than those which even an Alexander could weave, ere they would knit themselves together. And as far as any practical realization of the hopes which at any time the world cherished, from this it now was further off than ever. The iron kingdom, the fourth beast, dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, had broken all other, and was stamping the residue under its feet ; until it seemed now as if brutal force was all that remained, or that had a meaning any more, and as if the world only could be prevented from falling into pieces by those links and bands of iron, which were forged around it.

But how hateful such a world was to live in, how intense a loathing it inspired in each nobler spirit, the works of Tacitus seemed preserved to us especially to tell. For surely this is the key-note of them, the predominant thought, this indignation and scorn, which all words, even his own, seem weak to him to utter, at the sight of the high places of the earth, the seats of blessing, the thrones of beneficent power, occupied by the meanest and basest of their kind,—till we feel, as we read, this conviction to have been branded as with burning iron on his soul, that it were better

ten thousand times not to be, than to witness the things which he has witnessed, and to bear the things which he has borne. Nor on his soul only was the conviction branded, but on those, we cannot doubt, of multitudes besides, whose more dumb agony found only its adequate expression in his words.

But these failures, these shipwrecks of the world's hopes, these issues of things so different from the promise with which they started, this agony, this despair, they were not for nothing. They were part of that severe discipline of love to which the world was being submitted: they helped to constitute that fulness of time in which the Son of God should come, and, coming, find acceptance. Not till the world's pride and self-confidence were thoroughly broken, would it have been prepared to humble itself under his cross, would it have accepted that cross for the standard round which it rallied. For the breaking of this pride two great experiments had been going forward at the same time, had run through, as they gave a moral meaning to, all the anterior history of the world—experiments which needed both to be thoroughly and fairly tried. Of the Jewish it concerns us not here to speak at large: it was this, if righteousness could come by the law; if there was a law which could give life—an external rule of

conduct, even though of divine appointment, which could sanctify and save—if there was not a weakness and falseness in man, which would defeat and frustrate it all. This was most needful, and only through the process of this could a Saul have been transformed into a Paul.

But the other—it may not seem to us so directly of God's ordaining. Yet it was so; for it was of the very essence of it that He should not mingle in it so far, should seem to have less to do with it;—that those to whom it was given to try it out should walk in their own ways, and be left to their own resources. The experiment was this, whether man could unfold his own well-being out of himself—whether art or philosophy or institutions could give it to him; whether in any of these he could truly find himself and the good for which he was made. And the experiment, we cannot say that it was unfairly tried, or imperfectly worked out. All which was required for its success was there, and had been given in largest measure. God had raised up men of the most glorious gifts, of the mightiest strength of will; and surely had deliverance lain in ought which man could unfold, by his own strength, out of his own being, the world had been indeed redeemed, and had found the fountain of salvation in itself.

But fair and flattering, full of the promise of success, as the results shewed oftentimes for a while, there was ever a worm at the root of this glory of the world. The moment of highest perfection was evermore the moment of commencing decay. How deeply tragic, though in different ways, the history of the Greek and Roman worlds! how had the paths of glory led one and the other, though by diverse ways, to the grave of all their moral and spiritual independence; the intellectual conquests of the one and the worldly triumphs of the other, however diverse, yet having agreed in this, that they alike left the victors enslaved, degraded, and debased—the Greek a scorn to the Roman*, and the Roman to himself. And now the fresh creative energy of an earlier time had all departed and disappeared: and that springing hope, which contemplated its objects, if not as attained, yet at least as attainable, was no more. The world had outlived itself and its attractions†—saddest of all, had outlived even its hopes; the very springs of those hopes seemed to be dried up for ever. Yet was not this without its purpose, its blessing. It was something to be shut in to the one remedy, all

* See such passages as Cicero *Pro Flacco*, c. 4.

† Augustine: *Mundus tantâ rerum labe contritus, ut etiam speciem seductionis amiserit.*

other devices having failed. This was the emptiness of which Christ's coming should be the fulness. In all this agony, this mighty yearning of souls, the gates of the world were being made high and lifted up, that the King of Glory might come in. Only in that utter despair, in that sense of decrepitude, of death already begun, would the world have welcomed aright the Prince of Life, who came to make all things young, and out of the wreck and fragments of an old world, to build up a fairer and a new.

And such he built up indeed. "They went astray in the wilderness out of the way, and found no city to dwell in: hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. So they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." And this city of habitation, this kingdom, was all which they *had* asked for, or could ask. It was a *free* fellowship, the constraining bands of it being bands of love and not of force; and He that founded it fulfilling the idea of the true spiritual conqueror of men, who should subdue all hearts by the mighty magic of love—as some of old had been reaching out after this, when they dreamed of Osiris, that he went forth to conquer the world not with chariots and with

horses, but with music; for so had they felt that the power which truly wins must be a spiritual one, an appeal to the latent harmonies in every man—that in a kingdom of heaven law must be swallowed up in love,—not repealed, but glorified and transfigured, its hard outline scarcely visible any more in the blaze of light with which it is surrounded.

It was a *large* fellowship—larger than the largest which the heart of man had conceived; for it should leave out none, it should trample upon none: He that was its Head should “be favourable to the simple and needy, and preserve the souls of the poor.” Nay, it should be larger than this, for it should embrace heaven and earth. That whereof the great Italian sage had caught a glimpse, that *φιλία*, that amity of all things, whether they be things in heaven or things on earth, had found its fulfilment. Henceforward heaven and earth, angels and men, constituted one kingdom, “his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

It was a *righteous* fellowship. If ought of unrighteousness was *within* it, it was there only as a contradiction to the law of that kingdom, and presently to be separated off: even as all of unrighteous that was *against* it was in due time to be taken out of the way; for it in its weakness was yet stronger than the strongest. It was only weak as the staff

of Moses was weak ; which being one, and an implement of peace, did yet break in pieces all weapons of war, the ten thousand spears of Pharaoh and his armies.

And being this righteous kingdom, it was also an *eternal* kingdom, having in it no seeds of decay, a kingdom not to be moved, which should endure as long as the sun and moon endureth, of the increase of which there should be no end.

To this city, brethren, ye are come—the city of which such glorious things are spoken, the city of our God. Not only prophet and king of Israel, but sage and seer of every land, have desired to see the things which we see, and have not seen them—so truly are they the best things which man can conceive, or God can give. And what do they require of us but a walk corresponding? Citizens of no mean city, whose citizenship is in heaven, we must not shew ourselves unworthy of so high an honour. It is the very aggravation of the sinner's sin that he deals frowardly in the land of uprightness ; and because he does so it is declared that he shall not see the majesty of the Lord. (Isai. xxvi. 10.) We baptized men are in this “land of uprightness,” in this kingdom of the truth. For it is not that we *shall* come, but in the sure word of Scripture,

we *are* come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to all the glorious company which is there.

And surely the apostle's argument which he drew from this ought to stand strong for us, his exhortation to find place in our hearts; "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." (Heb. xii. 28).

LECTURE VIII.

CONCLUDING LECTURE.

1 THESSALONIANS, v. 21.

Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good.

It needs not, I trust, to remind you, brethren, that in these lectures which are now concluding, we have been engaged in the seeking to discern the prophecy of Christianity, which has run through all history ; I have traced in them, so far as under the conditions and limitations of such discourses I might, the manner in which the old world was in many ways blindly struggling to be that better thing which yet it never could truly be, except by the free grace and gift of God,—to come to that new birth, which yet it could not reach, until power for this mighty change was given it from on high. We have asked ourselves whether we could not discern an evident tending of men's thoughts and feelings and desires in one direction, and that direction the cross of Christ,—a great spiritual current, which has been strongly and constantly setting that way ; so that his bringing

forth of his kingdom into open manifestation, if in one sense a beginning, was in another, and in as true a sense, a crowning end.

And it has cohered intimately with the purpose of these lectures, which, according to the purpose of their founder, should assume more or less of a *defensive* character, to urge the apology for our Christian faith which is here. It has been to me an argument for the truth and dignity of his mission who was its author, to find that in Him all fulness dwelt, all lines concentrated, all hopes of the world were accomplished. For surely the King of Glory shews to us more glorious yet, when we are able to contemplate Him not merely as the Prophet and Priest and King of the Covenant, but as the satisfier of vaguer, though not less real, aspirations, of more undefined longings, of more wide spread hopes—when looking at *Him*, we take note with the inspired seer, that on his head are *many* crowns,—and looking at his *doctrine*, that not Israel only, but the isles had waited for his law.

This my subject I have now brought to a close; or at least I dare not, at this latest moment, open it upon another side. I may perhaps more profitably dedicate the present opportunity to the considering of some ways in which our recognition of the intimate relation between all that went before, and all that now

is, between the hopes of the past and the fulfilments of the present, may practically and usefully influence our study of antiquity. For indeed a Christian view of the ancient world, which shall neither despise it, because it is not what it could not be, itself Christian, because its grains of finer gold, of purer ore, are mixed with so much impure and debasing; nor yet on the other hand glorify it, as though its imperfect anticipations of the truth were as good as, or rendered superfluous, the manifestation of the perfect image of God in his Son, or its faint streaks of light were as true an illumination as the day-spring from on high; this indeed it is most profitable for us that we should win. It may preserve us from extremes and exaggerations on either hand, into which we are in danger of running. It may preserve us too from a listless, careless, unfruitful study of that which, unless we neglect the plain duties which lie before us, must form one of the chief occupations of several, the most precious and least recoverable years of our lives,—years in which our minds are to be built up, if built up at all; in which, more than in any other, our characters are being moulded, and are receiving that impress which they shall bear to the end.

The exaggerations to which I allude are

twofold. There is that, first, against which one is almost unwilling to say a word, springing as it so often does, out of a state of mind in which there is so much that is admirable,—giving witness for a moral earnestness, without which men would have been scarcely tempted to it; I mean the exaggeration of those, who in a deep devotion to the truth, as it is a truth in Christ Jesus, count themselves bound by their allegiance to Him, by his name which they bear, his doctrine which they have learned, his Spirit which they have received, to take up an hostile attitude to every thing, not distinctly and avowedly Christian, as though any other conduct were a treason to his cause—a betrayal of his exclusive right to the authorship of all the good which is in the world. In this temper we may dwell only on the guilt and misery and defilements, the wounds and bruises and hurts, of the heathen world; or if ought better is brought under our eye, we may look askant and suspiciously upon it, as though all recognition of it were disparagement of something better. And so we may come to regard the fairest deeds of unbaptized men as only more shewy sins. We may have a short but decisive formula with which to dismiss them: we may say, These deeds were not of faith, and therefore they could not please God.

The men that wrought them knew not Christ, and therefore their work was worthless—hay and stubble, to be utterly burned up in the day of the trial of every man's work.

Yet is it in truth a violation of the law of conscience, to use so sweeping a language as this. Our allegiance to Christ as the one fountain of light and life, demands that we affirm none to be good but Him—no goodness but what proceeds from Him: but it does not demand that we deny goodness, because of the place where we find it—because we find it a garden-tree in the wilderness; but rather that we claim it for Him who was its true source and author, and whom it would itself have gladly owned as such, if, belonging to a happier time, it could have known Him. We do not make much of a light of nature, when we allow a righteousness in those, to whom in the days of their flesh the Gospel had not come; we only affirm that the Word, though He had not yet dwelt among us, yet being the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, had lighted them. Some glimpses of his beams gilded their countenances, and gave to them whatever brightness they wore; and in recognizing this brightness, whatsoever it was, we are giving honour to Him, and not to them; glorifying the grace of God, and not the powers of man.

And if in the earnestness and exclusive-

ness of a first love to Christ, and to that word of Holy Scripture which directly testifies of Him, all teaching of all other books, in which is no explicit mention of his name, should appear valueless to us; if all else should taste flat and dull, because we taste not there the sweetness of that One Name which is sweeter than all, yet even this may find its remedy—and that remedy one, which shall not require us to go back one jot from this earnestness which everywhere looks for Him and finds all savourless without Him; this is too precious to let go, and there are no other gains would compensate for its loss. But the help will lie rather in widening the circle of our Christian sympathies; in cultivating a finer spiritual ear, and one which shall be more quick to catch the fainter echoes and whispers of his name, which are borne to us from other fields than those of Scripture; in learning to look for Him even where *they* thought not directly of Him, whose pages we may hold in our hand. Let us learn to take keener note of the manner in which all things pointed to Him, all things were asking for Him—the old world passing judgment on itself*, and out of its

* Cicero (*Tusc. Quæst.*, l. 2, c. 22): In quo viro erit perfecta sapientia, (*quem adhuc nos quidem videmus neminem*: sed philosophorum sententiis, qualis futurus sit, *si modò aliquando fuerit*, exponitur,) is igitur &c.

own lips at once condemning itself, and demanding its Redeemer*, in confessions of incurable evils†, in voices of deepest sadness, in acknowledgements of the vanity of all things, in language that seems often marvelously overruled to have a deeper significance, to bear the burden of a larger thought than it is possible that he who uttered it could have had in his mind, or could have attached to his words.

As for instance, when it is said‡ that the highest righteousness must be approved in extremest trial, that if we would know certainly whether one be indeed a lover of the good, he must be set in those conditions, in which to abide by the good shall bring upon him every outward calamity, shame and loss and scorn and torture and death, all which he might have avoided would he ever so little have gone back from that good; the righteousness which he chooses must be stripped utterly bare of every ornament, yea, must seem to the world as the extremest unrighteousness, and then only it will be seen whether he

* Seneca (*Ep.* 52): *Nemo per se satis valet ut emergat: oportet manum aliquis porrigat; aliquis educat.*

† Seneca, *De Irâ*, l. 2, c. 8.

‡ By Plato, (*De Repub.* l. 2, c. 4, 5.) I have not seen it noted how the reverse of the picture, the perfectly unrighteous man, whom Plato draws, is almost as remarkable a prophecy in its kind, of Antichrist, and of the deceitful glory which will surround him.

loves it for its own sake—to us Christians shall not this possible case at once present itself as an actual one, shall we not catch here, as many indeed *have* caught, a prophetic word about the cross, and about Him who even in this way was proved, by ignominy and scorn and suffering and death, whether He would love the good and hate the evil; and who did by a distinct act of his will choose for his portion that righteousness to which all these were linked, and which could only lead Him by roughest paths to the shamefullest and bitterest end? Or when another expresses his conviction that a sacred Spirit dwells with man, yea, not *with* him only, but *in* him, a spirit which is not his own, however freely it converses with him, a Spirit which treats him as he treats it*, shall we refuse to acknowledge here a word which was reaching out after that Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and the Son, which, dwelling in God, does also dwell in sanctified souls; which if we grieve, will grieve us, which if we continue to provoke, will utterly forsake us? And in many such ways as these we may disentangle the

* Seneca, (*Epist.* 41) : Sacer intra nos spiritus sedet, malorum bonorumque nostrorum observator et custos ; hic prout à nobis tractatus est, ita nos ipse tractat... Quemadmodum radii solis contingunt quidem terram, sed ibi sunt unde mittuntur, sic animus magnus et sacer, et in hoc demissus ut propius divina nossemus, conversatur quidem nobiscum, sed hæret origini suæ.

golden threads of a finer woof than its own, which were running through the whole tissue which the ancient world was weaving for itself—we may delightedly observe how the cross of Christ was as an invisible magnet, drawing hearts to itself by a mighty, though secret, attraction, even before it was openly lifted up, an ensign for the nations.

Let us remember too how little the world would have been able to do without this, which sometimes we are tempted to despise. Difficult as was the world's reception of the word, and its transition to the faith, of Christ, how much more difficult would it have been without this preparation. What another thing would it have been, if the word about the Son of God, where it first was delivered, besides correcting and purifying, had needed also to create the very foundations of religious belief and ethical science on which it rested; if it had been needful for it to be not merely the seed, but the soil, having first to form the very ground in which it should itself afterwards find room and depth to germinate. If instead of finding a language ready at hand, which it could appropriate, and needed only thus to rescue for itself*, if instead of this,

* Thus not merely the more obvious, but the more recondite rites of heathenism, have been made to set forth far better things than themselves. For example, the mysteries

all nobler terms, all which spoke of worship, of religion, of sanctity, of initiation, of atonement, of piety, had been absent from it, how different the case would have been. And with the absence of the *things*, there would also have been inevitably the absence of the *words* which are their correlatives; language being nothing more than thought and feeling permanently fixing and embodying themselves; being only as the pillars of Hercules which mark how far the conquest of spirit have advanced.

No one can have thoughtfully perused the modern records of missionary labour among savages, and the almost insurmountable hindrances opposed to the Gospel by languages, if they deserve the name, impoverished of each nobler and deeper element, languages in which is no speculation, no distinction, no hoarded thought, no embodied morality, no unconscious wisdom, no words, in short, but for the barest

yield the substratum of language and imagery and allusion to each word of the following noble passage, in which Clement (*Cohort. ad Gent.* c. 12) is exhorting the Gentiles to become *μύσται* of Christ: "Ὡ τῶν ἁγίων ὡς ἀληθῶς μυστηρίων ὃ φῶτος ἀκηράτου. δαδουχούμαι, τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τὸν Θεὸν ἐποπτεύσας· ἅγιος γίνομαι, μνούμενος· ἱεροφαντεῖ δὲ ὁ Κύριος, καὶ τὸν μύστην σφραγίζεται, φωταγωγῶν καὶ παρατίθεται τῷ Πατρὶ τὸν πεπιστευκότα, αἰῶσι τηρούμενον. Ταῦτα τῶν ἐμῶν μυστηρίων τὰ βακχεύματα· εἰ βούλει, καὶ σὺ μου, καὶ χορεύσεις μετ' ἀγγέλων ἀμφὶ τὸν ἀγέννητον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον καὶ μόνον ὄντως Θεόν, συνμυμνῶντος ἡμῖν τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου.

needs of the animal man, without feeling that it is a miserable necessity when the Truth must weave for itself the very garments in which it shall array itself, and is in danger of losing its treasures in the very attempt to communicate them,—so wretched are the only channels through which it can convey them. And considering this, he will esteem it to have been an infinite mercy, yea a very primal necessity, that the Truth, where it uttered itself in that which should be its normal utterance for all future ages of the Church, where it first took body and shape, should find, as regarded language, vessels ready prepared for its new wine, and only waiting for an higher consecration,—an inheritance which it had but to make its own, entering upon it, as the children of Israel entered upon vineyards which they had not planted, and wells which they had not digged, and houses which they had not built, of which yet they became the rightful possessors from henceforth.

Nor can we doubt that by *that*, which we with our fuller knowledge, our larger grace, are inclined to slight, many were preserved from defilements, in which otherwise they had been entangled,—that there was a conservative element therein*, keeping them for something

* The consideration of the Greek philosophy as a *προπαιδεία* for the reception of the absolute Christian truth, is a more

better than itself, and in due time handing them over to the school of Christ. To mention but a single example. Few who have read

recurring one, and takes a more prominent place, in the writings of the later Clement, than perhaps in those of any other teacher of the early Church. Thus he speaks of it in one place as a step to something higher: (ὕποβάθραν οὖσαν τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν φιλοσοφίας, *Strom.* l. 6, c. 8.) Again, as a preparatory discipline, and ordained to be such by the providence of God: (ἐκ τῆς θείας προνοίας δεδόσθαι, προπαιδεύουσιν εἰς τὴν διὰ Χριστοῦ τελείωσιν, *Strom.* l. 6, c. 17); and so again as an anterior culture of the soil of man's heart for receiving the seed of life: (προκαθαίρει καὶ προεθίζει τὴν ψυχὴν εἰς παραδοχὴν πίστεως, *Strom.* l. 7, c. 3.) It would seem from more passages than one in his writings, that he felt it needful to defend himself for the so high appreciation in which he held the philosophy of Greece: ἦν τινες διαβεβλήκασιν, ἀληθείας οὖσαν εἰκόνα ἐναργῆ, θεῖαν δωρεὰν "Ἐλλησι δεδομένην. There were those who warned against its attractions, as being those of the "strange woman" of Prov. v. 3—8, "whose lips drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smother than oil." (*Strom.* l. 1, c. 5.) The heathen philosophers were according to them the "thieves and robbers" which "came before" Him who was the true Shepherd of men (*Strom.* l. 1, c. 17). Tertullian may be taken as a representative of the more intolerant view (*Apol.* c. 46): Quid simile Philosophus et Christianus? Græciæ discipulus et cœli? famæ negotiator et salutis? verborum, et factorum operator?...interpolator erroris, et integrator veritatis? furator ejus et custos? Whatever exaggeration there *is* in the language of Clement, yet this I think is certain, that his strong expressions have their rise in a deep and solemn feeling, that nothing anywhere which is good, by which men have been kept back from any evil, or prepared to any good, but must be traced up to God. He dared not trace it to any other; for speaking of this very thing his words are, πάντων μὲν γὰρ αἴτιος τῶν καλῶν ὁ Θεός. (*Strom.* l. 1, c. 5.) And that he did not make the difference between

will forget the way in which the falling in with the Hortensius of Cicero kindled the young Augustine, and inflamed him with a passionate love of wisdom. What a moment it was in his life when he lighted on that treatise, how greatly did it serve to arrest him in that downward career which he was then too rapidly treading, to hinder him from utterly laying waste his moral life! How did it set him to the seeking for goodly pearls, through the goodliest of all, the pearl of great price, he was not yet to find! He himself in after years describes all this, with thankful ascriptions of praise to the guiding hand of his God, and telling how that book, though it did not and could not bring him into the inmost sanctuary of the faith, yet was to him in the truest sense a porch to that august temple

the two a mere question of degree is plain from such expressions as these: Χωρίζεται ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ ἀλήθεια τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς, εἰ καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ μετείληφεν ὀνόματος, καὶ μεγέθει γνώσεως, καὶ ἀποδείξει κυριωτέρᾳ, καὶ θείᾳ δυνάμει· θεοδίδακτοι γὰρ ἡμεῖς. (*Strom.* l. 1, c. 20.) That other was the wild olive which had need, ere it bore any nobler fruit, of insertion upon the good (*Strom.* l. 6, c. 15); words which may suggest a comparison with that most eloquent passage at the end of the first book of Theodoret, *De Græc. Affect. Curat.* And those remarkable words have been often quoted in which Clement likens heretics and founders of human systems to the rabble rout that tore the body of Pentheus limb from limb: so *they* tore the truth, and then each boasted of the fragment in his hands as though it were the whole (ἐκάστη ὅπερ ἔλαχεν, ὡς πᾶσαν ἀνέχει τὴν ἀλήθειαν).

not made with hands, into which at a later day he should enter; and did at once hand him over to the searching of the Scriptures, though as yet he found not in them the hid treasures of wisdom and of knowledge*.

But I spoke of exaggerations *on either side* into which we were liable to fall. To take the very opposite extreme to this of painting the old world in colours of unredeemed black-

* *Conf.* l. 3, c. 4: Usitato jam discendi ordine perveneram in librum quemdam cujusdam Ciceronis, cujus linguam ferè omnes mirantur, pectus non ita. Sed liber ille ipsius exhortationem continet ad philosophiam, et vocatur *Hortensius*. Ille verò liber mutavit affectum meum, ... et vota ac desideria mea fecit alia. Viluit mihi repentè omnis vana spes, et immortalitatem sapientiæ concupiscebam æstu cordis incredibili.

He has very interesting acknowledgements (*Conf.* l. 7, c. 9, 20, 21) of the effect which the Platonist books exerted upon him at the great crisis of his life that went before his conversion,—what he found in them, and what he did not find—where they helped, and where rather they hindered him: concluding with this declaration of the things which he had looked for there in vain: Hoc illæ litteræ non habent, Lacrymas Confessionis, Sacrificium tuum, Spiritum contribulatum, Cor contritum et humiliatum, Populi salutem, Sponsam, Civitatem, Arrham Spiritûs Sancti, Poculum pretii nostri. Nemo ibi cantat: Nonne Deo subdita erit anima mea? ab ipso enim salutare meum: etenim ipse Deus meus et salutaris meus, susceptor meus, non movebor ampliùs. Nemo ibi audit vocantem: Venite ad me qui laboratis... Et aliud est de silvestri cacumine videre patriam pacis, et iter ad eam non invenire, et frustra conari per invia, circum obsidentibus et insidiantibus fugitivis desertoribus cum principe suo leone et dracone: et aliud tenere viam illuc ducentem, curâ cœlestis imperatoris munitam, ubi non latrocinantur qui cœlestem militiam deseruerunt; vitant enim eum sicut supplicium.

ness, we may dwell exclusively on the fairer side which it presents, shutting wilfully our eyes to each darker and more revolting spectacle which it shews. Our taste may be gratified, and out of a lack of any deeper moral wants, we may come to say with the poet, "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty," and where we find beauty and proportion and harmony, we may be ready to pardon the absence of every thing beside; just as those Italian literati at the revival of learning, who preferred calling themselves brethren in Plato to brethren in Christ, to whom the groves of Academus were far more than the waters of Siloam, and the cultivation of taste than the promotion of holiness—men who so mourned over the vacant thrones of Olympus, that to them an heaven opened and angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man, seemed but an insufficient compensation.

But such a nearer acquaintance with the world which was before and out of Christ, as these studies faithfully pursued must give us, will teach us that if there are sides on which heathen mythology stands related to, and has the recollection and intimation of, something higher, there are also other sides upon which it lies under the influence of man's corruption, is itself the outgrowth of his foolish sin-darkened heart, with the impurities of its origin

cleaving to it,—does itself help distinctly to mark his downward progress toward idolatry, and toward the losing of the Creator in the creature,—is often only the strangely distorted resemblance, never more than the faint prophecy, of the coming truth. And if so, we shall feel that to linger with *that* is ridiculous, whose only worth is that it hands on to something better than itself, and is capable of being translated into a nobler language than its own. So too we shall feel that if the ancient philosophy had glorious ethical precepts, yet were they but adumbrations of the truth, since they wanted, for the most part, that body and substance which action alone could give them ; as is plain from unnumbered confessions and complaints on all sides heard, that the world's physicians had not healed themselves, much less their patients ; as is plainer still in the colossal character which sin had assumed at the time of Christ's appearing, till it sat as it were incarnate in the person of a Tiberius on the throne of the world. In all this we shall behold how feeble all the barriers which the world's wisdom could raise up, to stay the overflowings of the world's ungodliness and evil.

But to imagine yet a third position ; we may read these books, not indeed setting them up in our affections against the truths

which ought to be dearest to us, nor on the other hand slighting them, because not themselves Christian; but failing altogether to trace in them any relation at all to the great facts of the spiritual life of man; forgetting that the meaning of books is to make us understand something else besides books, that we miss their significance to us, when they have their end in themselves, when they do not hand us on to life and to action; when they explain to us no mysteries of our being, help us in no struggles of our souls, explain to us no dealings of our God.

There was a time in our lives,—yet a time which we who are here present should now have left behind us,—when this might have been natural enough, when it would have been premature to begin to meditate on the moral problems which these books present, or to do more than first to master these difficulties, and these overcome, to walk up and down admiring and enjoying the new and wondrous world into which they had helped to conduct us. But the time is gone by, when that alone was our task. Further duties are ours—to study that classical antiquity in the light which our Christian faith and experience throw back upon it, with an open eye for its moral good and for its moral evil, with an entire confidence that in Christ and in his Gospel is given to us the

key of knowledge to its right understanding. Let us feel that not by some strange inconsistency, some traditional usage which we will not abandon, but cannot defend, it has come to pass that a literature and philosophy, not Christian but heathen, hold the place which they do among *us*, members of the Church of Christ—are still contemplated, as they *have* been contemplated in time past, by each wiser and more thoughtful man, as an indispensable organ for all higher education, necessary instruments for the cultivating of the complete humanity; and that this only could have been, inasmuch as they stand in some real and intimate relation to the innermost fact of our lives, to our Christian hope—a relation of defect it will often be, yet a relation not the less, which should not be overlooked or denied.

And these things being so, we fall below our position, we fall below the purpose with which these books were placed in our hands, when we fail to look at them in this light. And in this light to look at them will not mar nor hinder that free joy in them which in earlier times may have been ours. We may keep that earlier delight, and yet, keeping it, may pass on to a deeper and more meditative emotion. For indeed with what livelier interest shall we occupy ourselves with these tasks, when we feel that they are not disconnected

with the highest things of our life, the most solemn questions which can employ us as baptized men. How many will be the thoughts and emotions, and all of them purifying and ennobling, which these studies, rightly pursued, will cherish within us! Surely oftentimes a divine compassion will stir in our hearts, as with an ear made open by love, we drink in the voices of the world's deep disquietude, the confessions of an intolerable burden, which are evermore finding utterance there*. For however the prevailing tone of that heathen world may be lightsome and gay, a summons to enjoy the present, to pluck the roses of life ere they wither, yet in its laughter there is heaviness; and oftentimes that laughter is followed by a sigh drawn from deeps of the heart far deeper than those where its smiles were born. Surely we shall find in these cries of a constant unrest, a thousand confirmations of his word, who, heathen as he was, yet likened man in his separation from God, to a child torn from its mother's arms, and which nowhere could be well, till it was restored to those arms once more†.

Again, as we acquaint ourselves with the lamentations of mourners for their dead, lamentations so deep and so despairing, as to explain

* Lucretius, l. 3, v. 1058—1083. Pliny: *Nec miserius quidquam homine, nec superbius.*

† Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 12, p. 405, ed. Reiske.

to us all the meaning of that sorrowing without hope, which by the apostle is attributed to the heathen*; as we hear too the wretched consolations of miserable comforters, the slight palliations of sharpest sorrows, which were all that, with all their kindness, they could suggest, we shall know how to prize the oil and wine, the strong consolations which are stored in the Gospel for the bruised and the smitten heart.

Or a compassion profounder yet will stir within us, as the voices reach us, which shew that the very citadel of hope was lost, voices of an utter uncertainty about all things, and these coming from some of the earth's noblest spirits, who asked of themselves, and could give no satisfying answer to their own question,

* How affecting a picture does Augustine give of what his feelings were, when, in the time during which he was still moving in the element of heathen life, the friend of his soul was taken from him (*Conf.* l. 4, c. 4): Quo dolore contenebratum est cor meum; et quidquid aspiciebam, mors erat. Et erat mihi patria supplicium, et paterna domus mira infelicitas: et quidquid cum illo communicaveram, sine illo in cruciatum immanem verterat. Expetebant eum undique oculi mei, et non dabatur mihi; et oderam omnia, quia non haberent eum, nec mihi jam dicere poterant: Ecce veniet, sicut cùm viveret, quando absens erat. Factus eram ipse mihi magna quæstio, et interrogabam animam meam, quare tristis esset, et quare conturbaret me valde; et nihil noverat respondere mihi. Et si dicebam: Spera in Deum, justè non obtemperabat; quia verior erat et melior homo quem carissimum amiserat, quàm phantasma in quod sperare jubebatur. Solus fletus erat dulcis mihi, et successerat amico meo in deliciis animi mei.

whether there was indeed a God governing in righteousness*, or whether all was not given over to the blindest chance—whether they who did his will were a care to Him; whether they survived the grave, and if there were indeed any future seats appointed for the manes of the just.

And even that of impure which we shall encounter, as we must encounter it, there, proving, as it often has done, fuel of dark fires in unholy hearts, setting them as with sparks of hell in a blaze, it shall not be to us, who go not to seek it, who unwillingly encounter it, this incentive and provocative to evil. Rather shall this impure itself conspire to the same ends with all else which there we meet. It shall make us feel,—in its light we shall more plainly see, what hideous sores there must have been to be healed, when men could so glory in their shame,—what wounds to be stanchèd, what enemies to be overcome†. And intruding, as often that unholy does, among the fairest

* The reader will remember the way in which the *De Naturâ Deorum* concludes, and the entire indecision in which all is left. More explicit yet is that fifth chapter of the 2nd book of Pliny's *Natural History* with its open confession of an utter scepticism in any moral government of the world: *Irridendum vero agere curam rerum humanarum illud quidquid est summum. Anne tam tristi multiplicique ministerio non pollui credamus dubitemusve?*

† I borrow these remarkable words from the answer of one, having by his position full right to speak, to the proposal for

creations of genius, rising up like a plague-spot upon their foreheads, who were among

publishing an expurgated edition of the Classics for the use of schools. Rather, he says, he would have the works as the authors wrote them ; and encountering with his pupils any of those passages which, in such an edition, would have been omitted, he would make them the occasion of some such comment as the following : “ This lesson they teach you, that refinement of intellect will not purify the heart ; that great mental endowments may co-exist with great moral insensibility ; that vigour of understanding and delicacy of taste will not reform the world. You see that these have been tried and found wanting. Something more is needed. You may conclude also that the depravity of an age and country was great, in which those who were the most distinguished by their intellectual endowments and literary culture, thought themselves not only *licensed*, but *expected* thus to write. It follows that you have in these passages an evidence of the divine power and purity of that influence which *did* what all the wisdom of the world could *never do*. It is Christianity, and it alone, which has really *expurgated* the literature, not only of Greece and Rome, but of the civilized world. These passages are the trophies of the triumphs of Christianity. They shew us, as in a triumphal procession, what fearful enemies it has conquered. *Without* them you might have asked what social good has the Gospel done ? What moral blessings have we derived from it ? These passages forbid, they *answer*, those questions. They remind you from what, and into what you have been delivered, and by Whom. Therefore, had we expunged them, we should have diminished the strength and glory of that very cause which we desire to serve. Being what they are, I fear not that you should pervert them to an improper use. God forbid that you should dwell on them with any other feelings than those of sorrow mingled with thankfulness. Horace, had he lived when you do, would have been a Christian, and had he been a Christian, he would not have written thus ; but if you who are Christians, *love to read*, what he, had he been one, would have *loathed to write*, you, who ought to Christianise him, heathenise yourselves.”

the most gifted of their race, it shall teach us a solemn lesson, even this—how much of moral insensibility may co-exist with highest capacities of intellect—how little the sense of beauty by itself avails to preserve purity of heart, how needful it is that hearts should be in better guardianship than this—how the highest, if only the highest of the earth's, yields us no security against the lowest—that if there are pinnacles of heaven above every man, and *that* in him which prompts him to ascend them, so also are there abysses of sensuality yawning beneath his feet, and that in him which tempts him to engulph himself in these.

Nor will this be all; thoughts will mingle in these studies of a liveliest thankfulness to God, as amid the great shipwreck of the Gentile world, we recognize the planks by which one and another attained as we trust safely, and through the mercy of a Saviour whom as yet he did not know, to the shore of everlasting life—thankfulness mingled, it may oftentimes be, with something of an wholesome shame to ourselves, as we contemplate the faithfulness and fealty to the good and true, which even in the world's darkest hour have been shewn by them, whose knowledge was so little, and whose advantages so few, as compared with our own. And it shall seem to us then, as if

that Star in the natural heavens which guided those Eastern Sages from their distant home, was but the symbol of many a star which twinkled in the world's mystical night, but which yet, being faithfully followed, availed to lead humble and devout hearts from far off regions of superstition and error, till they stood beside the cradle of the Babe of Bethlehem, and saw all their weary wanderings repaid in a moment, and all their desires finding a perfect fulfilment in Him.

THE END OF THE LECTURES.

A SERMON

PREACHED

BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,
ON GOOD FRIDAY, 1846.

JOHN XIX. 25.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

THEY understood not the meaning, certainly not *all* the meaning, of the spectacle which was before them,—that weeping company, which as upon this day “stood by the cross of Jesus”—neither she who now at length was finding that word of the aged Simeon come true, “yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also”—nor that other Mary, the greatly sinning, and then greatly loving and greatly forgiven—no, nor yet the apostle who testified of these things, and who, as we learn from the verse which follows, having recovered from his brief fear, was also standing there, that he might receive the last legacy of love at the hands of his Lord. They understood it not all; as yet the mighty

mystery of that atoning sacrifice had only obscurely revealed itself to their eyes; they saw but darkly through the thick clouds of a present agony how that cross was indeed an altar, how it was *the* altar, the one true altar which had been ever reared—and how on it the one true Victim which should ever be offered, was now bleeding. And when all this in a little while became plain to them, as no doubt it did become, what new mysteries must they presently have found in it, what ever deeper significance must that which they had witnessed have had in their eyes. And how should it have been otherwise? For the things of Christ, and especially the things of the cross of Christ, are things which angels desire to look into, which angels themselves do not hope to fathom.

And yet, while all this is so, while the mystery of that cross is unsearchable, while we can never know all that it meant, while we can only dimly apprehend, for instance, what was in the mind of the apostle, when he spake of things that was there in heaven reconciled by its blood as well as things on earth, (Col. i. 20,) yet at the same time there is much that we *can* know. If it has hidden things for eternity, it has also most plain things for the present time. Indeed there never was before, there can never be

again, so plain a speaking to the world. That cross has a voice clearer than every other voice; it has a language more impossible to be mistaken. Let us only in spirit be gathered near it, let us only be found in the company of the faithful ones that are there, with the Mother blessed, and now afflicted, above women, with the Magdalene and with John, and there will come out from it voices that will speak to us in greater depths of our being than any other voices that have ever reached us from elsewhere. All that we need is, earnestly to ask that we may learn the lessons which it is set to teach us, that we may read the meaning of our lives, and the meaning of the world around us, in the light which is shed upon them from thence.

And first, brethren, how shall we dare with that cross in our view, with that cross lifted up before us, to lay out our lives for self-pleasing and self-indulging? I am not speaking here of those grosser forms of self-indulgence, which are evidently and plainly sinful, and still less of open and manifest sins, which go before men to judgement, which they who do declare plainly that they have no part nor lot with Him, who came to deliver men from their unrighteousness and their sins. But how shall we venture to lay out our lives for ourselves—how shall we

make the possessing of this world's honours, or its wealth, or its favour, or its high places, the main end and scope of our lives—exposing ourselves to St. Paul's rebukeful irony, "Ye are full, ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us?" How shall we dare, with that thorn-crown in view and all the concentrated agony of that hour, to live lives, as far as we can make them, of unbroken luxury and ease, taking no part in the sufferings of Christ which we can avoid—choosing ever the feast, and never the fast, choosing to sleep with them who slept in the garden, rather than to watch with Him who, being in an agony, prayed the more earnestly; so that when a Lent is passed, and all its blessed assistances for setting forward our soul's health have escaped us unimproved, our Lord's word of a mournful reproach, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" sound only too sadly and too appropriately in our ears?

I say, brethren, with Christ's cross before us, shall we attempt to shrink from and to evade our own? In truth a hopeless endeavour! for he who will not *take* his share in the world's burden, who draws his shoulder from under it, does not really escape it. His share of that burden is laid upon him still. All that he has effected by his attempt to shun it, is to miss the blessing of it. He has sought to save his life

and so perhaps has lost it. For thus it is ever. "Care finds the careless out." In a moment it leaps within the defences which a man has ever so carefully reared; in a moment the enemy is within them; and all the thought and labour of a life to exclude him has proved vain: and he whose labour it was that he might not have a crumpled rose-leaf under him, finds himself tossing suddenly upon a bed of thorns: and he who would not touch with his little finger his brethren's burdens, now finds his own laid heavily on himself. For even so does a righteous God evermore defeat men's plans of self-pleasing, and Himself lays upon them that, and often in far larger measure, which they would not *take* upon themselves. We have but this choice, to meet the toil and the task of life as manful combatants, or to be overtaken by them as cowardly fugitives. In one way or another they will inevitably be ours.

Therefore for these and for all other reasons, looking at that cross of Christ and seeing in it the gathering up of his whole life, the motto of it all, *that* to which all that went before was but as a long prelude, a *bearing* of the cross before He hung on it,—let us dare to say to ourselves; In the power of that cross I will die to myself, to my own will, and my own desires, in so far as they are mine, and not God's. It is an awful word, when we say it in earnest, when we say it, really meaning to carry it out, really

meaning that it shall be the death-knell of our own self-will which has sounded—an awful word, and all that is in us of the old man will remonstrate against it, will plead that life is not worth the living upon such conditions as these. Yet if thou dare to say it and to act on it, thou shalt find it a blessed word, and the work which thereupon thou shalt undertake a blessed work. Out of this death presently shall come life, even thy true life, which was utterly cramped and hindered before: this seeming bondage shall be thy truest liberty: this, which seems utter straitness for thy spirit, shall anon bring thy feet into a large room.

And yet let us not suppose, brethren, that it will be enough to say once that we will thus die to self; and then that all will be accomplished, that the victory will be gained. Once indeed we must say it for the first time and with the whole collected purpose of our will. Yet ever and again shall we find need to say it anew. For on every side we shall find the love of luxury, of ease, of pleasure, in short, of the world, encroaching upon us, which ever and again will need to be arrested and put back. Hardly, and but with earnest prayer and after many a struggle, do we win a foot of ground here, and still more hardly do we keep that we have won. To stamp the cross upon our lives and on all parts of them, this is no slight

undertaking. What continual danger are we in of slipping out of this, of finding excuses for not attempting it; how ready is each one of us to smooth away all the rough corners and sharp edges of obedience, all that brings us in unpleasant contact and collision with the world or with our own desires—or to let that and these by their constant but unnoted friction smooth them away for us. And yet, if that cross means anything, if Christ hanging there was in any sense a pattern and example to us, all this in the power of his Spirit must be attempted, and must be done.

Here then is our first lesson: that cross witnesses against lives which, stained it may be with no great sins, are yet marked by no great self-devotion; which, perhaps without excess, are yet also without self-denial: lives which in the world's sight and in the world's estimate are decent and comely, and would have indeed been so, if no Saviour had suffered, and in suffering shewn us a more excellent way, and commanded us to walk in it.

But secondly, in what light does that cross shew to us a life, not such as I have spoken of, of ordinary decent worldliness, but of positive sin and open transgression of the divine law—that cross of Christ, upon which He condemned sin in the flesh? Oh, brethren, it is just this cross which throws so fearful a light upon sin

now, which will make it in the world to come so impossible to be forgiven. It will be the thorn-crowned brow, whose gaze it will be so dreadful hereafter to meet. On his head who shall be our Judge, there will be many crowns, but the crown of thorns, as it is the most glorious, so will it be the most terrible of all. It will be the nailed and the pierced hand which it will be so crushing to have laid on us in anger. It will be his cup of gall, which will have made our cup of sinful pleasure so guilty a thing. To have resisted the mighty attractions of the cross, this will be the great condemnation of sinners—to have made, as far as in them lies, that word of the Saviour vain, “I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.” It had been comparatively little to have stood out against the threatenings of righteousness: God, who made man brave, who meant that no terrors of earth should frighten him, could have forgiven even this perverse outcoming of his courage. But that when He Himself laid bare to us his beating heart and bid us to cast ourselves there, his wounded side that we might hide ourselves from his anger in it, then to have sullenly stood off, to have gone upon our own ways, and those ways, ways of evil, to have stopped our ears and made them adder-deaf to the mighty charmings of love, this will be the sin which will defy forgiveness.

See, I beseech you, here, what a life lived in sin is, a life lived in impurity, in excess,—with the back turned upon God and not the face ; see and understand that it is a life lived in defiance of the cross. Think not that the guilt of it is exhausted when it is regarded as a life lived in defiance of God's holiness ; it is far worse than this, it is one lived in defiance of his love. Such language each day speaks to us, but this day more than any other ; such language his cross speaks, who upon this day is set forth evidently crucified among us. We may still indeed choose, if we will, not to be reconciled with God, but let us know that we are doing so in a world which He has reconciled to Himself by the blood of that cross ; and let us make no false estimate of our guilt and of our danger.

And this brings me to my third point, which is this : How with that cross in view, can any of us refuse to believe that we are in a kingdom of grace ? how can any of us be waiting still and saying, It is *not* finished,—that men are not brought near to God, that there is any reluctance upon his part, needing to be overcome, any acceptableness required upon our parts beyond that sense of our guilt and misery, and that desire to be delivered from them, which will bring us to cast ourselves into those everlasting arms once spread out wide upon the accursed tree, in token of their readi-

ness to embrace a penitent and returning world? How with that standard lifted up, with that banner of love over us, can we conceive of ourselves, of any of our brethren, of any in the world, as yet far from God, as still out of the circle of his grace, except we be so by a distinct positive act of our own, whereby we refuse to receive and to believe the atonement?

And this fact, brethren, that we are living in a reconciled world, in a world reconciled to God by the cross of his Son, how does it change the aspect of that world in the midst of which we are living—how does it make all things new in it. For instance, our relation to each other man—how new does that become: he, too, is one for whom Christ died; he, too, is in the kingdom of the redeemed. That speech of the narrow-hearted scribe, “Who is my neighbour?” that speech of Cain, which selfishness is in one form or another evermore repeating, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” these have been put to silence, and no man may dare to utter them any more, since another voice has said, Owe no man anything, but to love one another. This is a debt which thou must ever owe, and paying ever, thou must count to be owing still, yea, owing unto every man. For since infinite love has been shewn to thee, therefore infinite love is demanded from thee.

And then again, if all which we have, we

have as redeemed men, in what light may we regard outward or inward advantages which may be ours—gifts of fortunes, powers of mind, stations of influence, high places in the world? May we regard them as exempting from toil, as justifying indolence? may we glory in them as our own? may we turn them to merely selfish purposes and ends? It is not so. We are members of one body—a body in which the strong shall bear the infirmities of the weak, the more greatly gifted shall serve in love those that are less so. The forwardest places in a natural world might perhaps have been interpreted without any very great guilt, as the foremost for ourselves; but in a redeemed world they mean very differently—they mean that those who have them shall be the forwardest in toil, in danger, in thought *for* others, in service *of* others. To be first, in the kingdom of God means to be last—to be chiefest, in some sense, to be servant of all: so has Christ read backward the lessons of human pride, so has He stained and shamed all the glory of the world, shewing a glory that excelleth.

Or again, what a light as from heaven falls from that cross upon all the sorrows of the world; until now that sorrow, if only it be a sorrow in God, is well-nigh transfigured into a joy. What a light has fallen from it

upon many a path dark as with the shadows of death, so that pilgrims looking at that cross have joyfully walked therein : how has it given them hymns in the night, hymns of joy in the darkest night of their sorrow. It has said what the old heathen world neither said nor could say, "Blessed are they that mourn ;" it has consecrated suffering, making it a thing divine, since the day that the Son of God has borne it ; it has made the house of mourning a more blessed place than the house of merriment, and a countenance soiled with penitential tears, a lovelier, a diviner sight, more of a spectacle for angels, than one drest in the brightest smiles which the world could lend it.

And lastly, in what light does that cross enable us to regard the sin which even as redeemed men we find working in us yet? Shall we look at it as the sign of an incomplete redemption, of a reconciliation with God which is only partly accomplished, and shall not be fully so till we have eked it out and completed it by additions of our own? shall we learn to regard ourselves as not thoroughly justified, till we be entirely sanctified? Oh no, brethren ; this Cross tells us a more blessed truth—of those who have been made perfect as pertaining to the conscience, who have had their sin, as regards the condemnation of it, put away from them as far as the east is from

the west; for our effectual High Priest by one oblation hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified—them therefore who have been justified from all things, and in whom the evil that remains in them, the corruption that still survives, is but left that they may learn in daily conflict with it, lessons of a deeper humility and a more constant waiting upon God. Which things being so, this strong consciousness of evil shall not make us to doubt or to deny the state of grace in which we stand; for this we must hold fast our faith in, as the very anchor of our souls, as that out of which alone a final salvation can come. But this sense of corruption, these dregs of the old nature, when they mingle with and trouble the clearness of our spirits, shall lead us rather to a mightier affiance upon Him, who only can subdue that corruption and establish us in that grace unto the end; and who, in sign that He meant to do so, that He had appointed us not to wrath but to salvation, set forth his Son, as upon this day, the propitiation for our sins.

THE END.

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